ʿAqīdat al-Nawawī wa-Bayān Qawl al-Salaf fīhā

Author: Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Shams al-Dīn

Translator: Abī al-Ward ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥanbalī

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Translator's note

Bismi-llāhi al-Raḥmān il-Raḥīm, and may the abundant peace and blessings of Allāh be upon the final messenger Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbdillāh, his family, his companions and whoever follows them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection.

Thereafter:

In front of you is the translation of the excellent treatise:

—ʿAqīdat al-Nawawī wa-Bayān Qawl al-Salaf fīhā—

This translation of –ʿAqīdat al-Nawawī wa-Bayān Qawl al-Salaf fīhā– was undertaken with the sincere intention of making accessible a valuable work that clarifies the Iʿtiqād of al-Nawawī and presents the position of the Salaf regarding it. Many readers who do not have access to the Arabic language may find benefit in this concise yet important treatise authored by Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn Shams al-Dīn — may Allāh preserve him and reward him for his effort in defending the sound ʿAqīdah and clarifying the truth.

If there are any mistakes, weaknesses, or ambiguities found in this translation or in the footnotes, then the

reader is kindly advised to refer to the original Arabic text for accuracy and clarification, as all correctness is from Allāh alone and all errors are from myself and Shayṭān.

I ask Allāh, taʿālā, to accept this humble effort purely for His sake, to make it a source of benefit for all who read it, and to reward the Shaykh, the translator, and every reader who seeks the ḥaqq with His mercy, forgiveness, and guidance.

Wa-l-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb al-ʿālamīn.

Abī al-Ward ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbd il-Raḥmān al-Ḥanbalī

28 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 1447

* * * *

Introduction

Bismi-llāh, wa-l-ḥamdu-li-llāh, may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allāh.

Thereafter,

I had compiled the creed of al-Nawawī into a book and published it without commenting on what he said. Then, when I saw that there were those who claimed that al-Nawawī was an Imām of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, it appeared to me that I should quote from the words of the scholars what clarifies the opposition of those beliefs to the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah, so that the matter would not be confused for anyone. Thus, I cited their statements after quoting from al-Nawawī.

Here are two notes:

First: I did not quote all the statements, nor did I quote those who affirm what al-Nawawī denied. Rather, I focused on the statements of those who clarify that what al-Nawawī said is not the view of Ahl al-Sunnah. For example, regarding the issue of Allah's elevation (ʿulūw), I did not quote the statements of Ahl al-Sunnah affirming it;

instead, I quoted from those who clarified that denying elevation is not the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah.

Second: The foundation of evidence for us in understanding revelation is the speech of the early generations. However, I may sometimes quote from the later or contemporary scholars due to the influence their words have upon a number of Muslims.

Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Dīn

20 Jumādā al-Ulā 1444 AH

* * * *

His Statement Regarding the Ṣifāt

Denial of Allāh's ʿUlūw

He commented on the ḥadīth of the slave girl:

“This ḥadīth is among the ḥadīths of the attributes, and regarding them there are two approaches that have been mentioned several times before in the Book of īmān. The first of them is: to believe in it without delving into its meaning, while holding the conviction that Allah, the Exalted, is unlike anything and exalting Him above the qualities of created beings. The second is: interpreting it in a way that befits Him.”

Then he mentioned the interpretations of the Jahmiyyah.

The first of them:

“That when a supplicant calls upon Him, he faces the sky, just as when a person praying faces the Kaʻbah — and that is not because He is confined in the sky, just as He is not confined to the direction of the Kaʻbah.”

And the second:

“She was among the worshippers of idols who worship the idols in front of them. So when she said, ‘In the sky,’ he knew that she was a monotheist and not among those who worship idols.” [1][1]

[1][1] Sharḥ Muslim (24/5).

And he said:

“The way of most of the Salaf — or all of them — is that they do not speak about the meaning of such texts, but rather they say: It is obligatory upon us to believe in them and to affirm for them a meaning befitting the majesty and greatness of Allāh, the Exalted, while holding with firm conviction that Allāh, the Exalted, is unlike anything and that He is exalted above of corporeality, movement, and being confined to a direction. [1][2]

I said: It is known that the people of kalām refer to elevation as confinement and direction.

Statements of the scholars regarding this

Yazīd ibn Hārūn (d. 206 AH) said:

“Whoever imagines ‘The Most Merciful rose over the Throne’ to mean other than what is in the hearts of the servants is a Jahmī.” [2][3]

Wahb ibn Jarīr (d. 206 AH) said:

“The Jahmiyyah are heretical zanādiqah; what they really

[2][1] Sharḥ Muslim (19/3).

[3][2] Masāʾil al-Imām Aḥmad, narration of Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (p. 360).

intend is to deny that He rose over the Throne." [1][4]

Saʿīd ibn ʿĀmir al-Ḍubʿī (d. 208 AH) said:

"The Jahmiyyah are worse in speech than the Jews and Christians. The Jews, Christians, and all the followers of religions have agreed that Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, is over the Throne, but they say that nothing is over the Throne." [2][5]

Al-Maymūnī asked Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal:

"O Abā ʿAbdillāh, we have been afflicted with these Jahmiyyah, "What do you say about one who says that Allah is not above the Throne?"

He replied: "All their speech revolves around kufr." [3][6]

Al-Karajī al-Qaṣṣāb said:

His saying, 'And to Him belongs whoever is in the heavens and the earth, and those who are near Him are not too proud to worship Him' [Qur'an 21:19], is a proof

[4][1] Khalq Afʿāl al-ʿIbād by al-Bukhārī (p. 30).

[5][2] Khalq Afʿāl al-ʿIbād by al-Bukhārī (p. 31).

[6][3] Al-ʿIlal wa Maʿrifat al-Rijāl by Aḥmad, narration of al-Marwazī and others, ed. Waṣī Allāh ʿAbbās (p. 197).

against the Muʿtazilah and the Jahmiyyah in what they claim — that Allāh, Glorified be His Majesty, cannot be described as having a distinct essence, and that He is not above the Throne. [1][7]

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“For those who deny that He is above the Throne — none among them is known except one who is defective in intellect and religion, according to the Ummah.” [2][8]

Al-Saffārīnī said:

“His saying, ‘Then He rose over the Throne,’ includes the refutation of the negators among the Jahmiyyah who say that there is nothing above the Throne except nonexistence, and that Allah is not established over His Throne, nor are hands raised up to Him.” [3][9]

Ibn Bāz was asked:

“A discussion occurred between me and one of the brothers as follows:”

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[7][1] Al-Nukat al-Dāllah ʿalā al-Bayān fī Anwāʿ al-ʿUlūm wa’l-Aḥkām (2/306).

[8][2] Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Bidʿihim al-Kalāmiyyah (3/472).

[9][3] Lawāmiʿ al-Anwār al-Bahiyyah (1/190).

When I asked him about the existence of Allāh, the Exalted, he said: “Allāh is not described by time or place.” So I argued with him using the saying of Allāh: “The Most Merciful rose over the Throne.” He said: “You are a disbeliever — Allāh is not in the heaven.”

He (Ibn Bāz) replied:

“This man who said to you such words, that Allah, Glorified be He, is not above the Throne — he is the disbeliever, the misguided misleader; for he has denied Allāh and denied His Messenger. Whoever says that Allah is not in the heaven, or not above the Throne, is a disbelieving, misguided Jahmī, a wicked person.” [1][10]

Ibn al-ʿUthaymīn said:

“There are matters in which ijtihād is not possible — things that are clear and evident — and we cannot say there is room for ijtihād in them. Whoever opposes them is stubborn. For example, regarding ‘Then He rose over the Throne’ — if someone says, ‘I only know istawā to mean istawlà (conquered),’ what do we say to this person? Do we say he is excused or stubborn? He is stubborn,

[10][1] Ḥukm man yunkir istiwāʾ Allāh ʿalā al-ʿArsh — https://binbaz.org.sa/fatwas/14402

without a doubt.” [1][11]

Objection and its response

Some people say that al-Nawawī does not deny Allāh’s ʿUlūw, and they quote his statement:

If the disbeliever says, “Lā ilāha illa Allāh, the King who is in the heaven,” or “except the King of the heaven,” he becomes a believer, as Allāh, the Exalted, said: “Do you feel secure from He who is in the heaven?” [2][12]

They then say: This is an acknowledgment from al-Nawawī of Allah’s ʿUlūw.

The Response:

First: He does affirm the phrase “Allāh is in the heaven,” but he empties it of its meaning, as we have read in his commentary on the ḥadīth of the slave girl.

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[11][1]https://www.alathar.net/home/esound/index.php?op=codevi&coid=128095

[12][2] Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (10/85).

He explicitly said in his commentary on the ḥadīth of the slave girl, quoting from his Imām, Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ:

“And is there any difference between anthropomorphism and affirming directions?! However, using the expressions that the Sharīʿah has used — such as that He is the Subduer above His servants, and that He rose over the Throne — along with holding to the verse that encompasses complete transcendence, which cannot be rationally understood otherwise, namely His saying, the Exalted: ‘There is nothing like unto Him.’” [1][13]

Second: What he said in Sharḥ Muslim was said after this. So, if you think there is a contradiction between the two, then what is in Sharḥ Muslim is what he relied upon, and it represents his retraction from what you quote from Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn. The proof that he authored Sharḥ Muslim after Rawdat al-Ṭālibīn is his statement in Sharḥ Muslim:

“The branches of this issue are many, and I have refined its main points in Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn.” [2][14]

[13][1] Sharḥ Muslim (5/25).

[14][2] Sharḥ Muslim (10/183).

Denial of Allah's Makān and ʿUlūw

In the ḥadīth of the Miʿrāj, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

"I was taken to the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary… Then fifty prayers were enjoined upon me every day and night. I descended to Mūsā ﷺ who said: 'What has your Lord enjoined upon your ummah?' I said: 'Fifty prayers.' He said: 'Return to your Lord and ask Him for a reduction.' … He said: 'So I returned to my Lord and said: O Lord, lighten the burden on my ummah… and I kept going back and forth between my Lord, Blessed and Exalted, and Mūsā.'"

Al-Nawawī said:

"His saying, 'So I returned to my Lord' — its meaning is: I returned to the place that which I first addressed Him with, then I addressed Him with in the second instance." [1][15]

Statements of the scholars regarding this

Imām Aḥmad, while mentioning the words of the Jahmiyyah, said:

[15][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/214).

“When people asked them about the saying of Allāh: ‘There is nothing like unto Him,’ they would say: … and He is not in any place other than a place.” [1][16]

Ḥarb al-Karmānī said:

“The Jahmiyyah are the enemies of Allāh; they are the ones who claim that the Qurʾān is created, that Allāh did not speak to Mūsā, that Allāh does not speak, is not seen, and His place is not known.” [2][17]

Al-Dhahabī transmitted this statement and said:

“Ḥarb was among the vessels of knowledge.” [3][18]

Al-Dārimī said:

“Everyone who knows Allāh and His place is more knowledgeable than the Jahmiyyah.” [4][19]

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[16][1] Al-Radd ʿalā al-Jahmiyyah wa’l-Zanādiqah by Imām Aḥmad, ed. Ṣubray (p. 98).

[17][2] Masāʾil Ḥarb al-Karmānī (3/980).

[18][3] Al-ʿUlūw li’l-ʿAlī al-Ghaffār (p. 194).

[19][4] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī — ed. al-Almaʿī (1/229).

Al-Karajī al-Qaṣṣāb said regarding His saying:

“If they are arrogant, then those who are near your Lord They glorify Him by night and day, and they do not become weary.” — This is a refutation of the Jahmiyyah and the Muʿtazilah, and of those who deny place and limits for Allāh, Glorified be He. [1][20]

ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī said:

“As for the Jahmiyyah, their statements include: ‘He has no known place.’” [2][21]

Denial that Allāh, the Exalted, Resides in the Heaven

Al-Nawawī said:

“If someone said: ‘There is no deity except the One residing in the heaven,’ he would not be a believer. Likewise, if he said: ‘There is no deity except Allāh residing in the heaven,’ for restfulness (residence) is impossible for Allāh, the Exalted.” [3][22]

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[20][1] Al-Nukat al-Dāllah ʿalā al-Bayān fī Anwāʿ al-ʿUlūm wa’l-Aḥkām (4/79).

[21][2] Al-Ghunyah li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq (1/185).

[22][3] Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (10/85).

Statements of the scholars regarding this

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324 AH) said:

“And it is the supplication of all the Muslims, when they turn to Allāh regarding a matter that has befallen them, to say: O Residing in the heaven, and in one manuscript: O Residing over the Throne. And in all their oaths: By Him who is veiled by seven heavens.” [1][23]

I said: I have a treatise entitled The Ruling on Describing Allāh, the Exalted, as Residing in the Heaven, in which I cited from the scholars who used this phrase without objection, and I did not include all the sources. [2][24]

Denial of Limit (Ḥadd) and Separation (Bāʾiniyyah)

Al-Nawawī said:

“As for the veil (ḥijāb), its origin in the language is prevention and covering. The reality of a veil occurs only for bounded bodies, whereas Allāh, the Exalted, is free from body and limits. What is meant here is what

[23][1] Al-Ibānah ʿan Uṣūl al-Dīyānah (p. 115).

[24][2] https://t.me/mshmsdin_books/12

prevents seeing Him.” [1][25]

Al-Nawawī cited, as evidence, the approving statement of al-Mutawallī:

“Whoever believes in the preexistence of the world, or The Origination of the Creator, or If someone denies what is established by consensus for the Eternal, such as His being All-Knowing and All-Powerful, or affirms what is negated for Him by consensus, such as colors, or affirms for Him connection and separation, he is a disbeliever.” [2][26]

Scholars' Statements on this

Denying separation entails denying limits and what the Salaf unanimously held regarding Allāh’s distinction from the Throne, and this leads to declaring them disbelievers. [3][27]

ʿUthmān al-Dārimī said:

“The objector also claimed that Allah has neither limit, nor end, nor boundary. This is the foundation upon which Jahm built his errors and from which he derived his chains of falsehood, and it is a statement that we have

[25][1] Sharḥ Muslim (3/14).

[26][2] Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (10/64).

[27][3] Article: Āthār al-Salaf fī Ithbāt Ḥadd Allāh al-Taʿālā.

not found anyone before Jahm among the scholars having preceded him in it." [1][28]

Yahyā ibn ʿAmmār said:

"Such and such a person came to us, denied the limit of Allah, the Exalted, and we expelled him from Sijistān." [2][29]

Ibn Taymiyyah said: "The Jahmiyyah used to say that He has no Ḥadd." [3][30]

I say: Denying "connection" (ittiṣāl) entails denying what has been authentically transmitted from the Tābiʿīn without objection — that Allāh touched ʿĀdam — and thus implies declaring them kuffār. [4][31]

Maysarah al-Tābiʿī said:

"Allāh did not touch anything of His creation except three: He created ʿĀdam with His Hand, wrote the Torah with His Hand, and planted the Garden of Eden with His

[28][1] Naqḍ ʿalā al-Marrīsī (1/223), ed. al-Almaʿī.

[29][2] Tārīkh Dimashq by Ibn ʿAsākir (2/253).

[30][3] Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Bidaʿihim al-Kalāmiyyah (3/43).

[31][4] Article: Qawl al-Salaf fī Ithbāt al-Mumāssah li-llāh Taʿālā.

Hand.” [1][32]

ʿIkrimah said:

“Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, did not touch anything with His Hand except three: He created ʿĀdam with His Hand, planted Paradise with His Hand, and wrote the Torah with His Hand.” [2][33]

Kaʿb al-Aḥbār said:

“Indeed, Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, did not touch with His Hand except three, ʿĀdam with His Hand, wrote the Torah with His Hand, and planted Paradise with His Hand. [3][34]

Distortion of the Attribute of Descent (Nuzūl)

Al-Nawawī said:

[32][1] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – ed. al-Shawwāmī, p. 93.

[33][2] Al-Sunnah by ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Aḥmad (1/296).

[34][3] Al-Sharīʿah by al-Ājurri (3/1185).

“The saying of the Prophet ﷺ: ‘Our Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven…’ — there are two views regarding it.

The first: It is the view of the majority of the Salaf and some of the theologians (mutakallimīn), that one believes it is true in a manner befitting Allah Most High, and that its apparent meaning, as understood concerning us, is not intended. They refrain from speaking of its interpretation, while holding the conviction that Allāh is exalted above the attributes of created beings, movement, and other qualities of creation.

The second: It is the view of most of the theologians and groups among the Salaf — it is narrated here from Mālik and al-Awzāʿī — that it is interpreted according to what befits it in its context. Based on this, they gave two interpretations: the first, as reported from Mālik Ibn Anas and others, is that it means ‘His mercy, command, and angels descend.’ The second is that it is metaphorical, meaning His turning toward those who supplicate with response and kindness.” [1][35]

I said: “Neither Mālik nor al-Awzāʿī are authentically reported to have said what has been attributed to them, as I have clarified in a separate article — its full citation is lengthy to reproduce

[35][1] Sharḥ Muslim (6/36).

here.” [1][36]

Statements of the scholars regarding this

Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād said:

“The ḥadīth of descent refutes the Jahmiyyah.” [2][37]

Al-Dārimī said:

“You have gone to deny the descent and reject it through various forms of falsehood and delusion — from the words of al-Marrīsī, Ibn al-Thaljī, and their likes among the Jahmiyyah.” [3][38]

Al-Barbahārī said:

“If you hear a man say, ‘We magnify Allāh too much’ when he hears the reports from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ — then know he is a Jahmī. He intends by this to reject the

[36][1] Article: The Jahmiyyah’s Claim that Imām Mālik Interpreted (Awwal) the Meaning of Descent. As for al-Awzāʿī, I did not find what was attributed to him.

[37][2] Al-Tamhīd by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (7/144, Moroccan ed.).

[38][3] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī, ed. al-Almaʿī (1/493).

reports from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, using this statement to oppose his narrations, claiming thereby that he is exalting and purifying Allāh, whenever he hears a ḥadīth about the vision (of Allāh), the descent, or other such matters." [1][39]

Al-Karajī al-Qaṣṣāb said:

"His saying, 'Do they wait except that Allāh should come to them in canopies of clouds and the angels?' [Q 2:210] is a clear proof against the Jahmiyyah regarding what they deny of movement and descent." [2][40]

Ibn Baṭṭah said:

"When the proof is established against the Jahmī, and he knows the authenticity of these ḥadīths but cannot deny them, he says: 'The ḥadīth is authentic, but the meaning of the Prophet's ﷺ saying, "Our Lord descends every night," is that His command descends.'" [3][41]

ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī said:

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[39][1] Sharḥ al-Sunnah by al-Barbahārī (p. 125).

[40][2] Al-Nukat al-Dāllah ʿalā al-Bayān fī Anwāʿ al-ʿUlūm wa-al-Aḥkām (1/160).

[41][3] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā by Ibn Baṭṭah (7/239).

“What the sects of the Muʿtazilah agreed upon is also the denial of the attributes established by revelation — such as istiwāʾ (rising over the Throne), nuzūl (descent), and others.” [1][42]

Denial of Allāh’s Coming (ityān) and Arrival (majīʾ)

Al-Nawawī said:

“His saying ‘then Allāh will come to them’ — the ‘coming’ (ityān) here refers to their seeing Him, because customarily, one who is absent cannot be seen unless he comes; thus the expression is figurative.” [2][43]

He (al-Nawawī) said:

“The meaning of coming and approaching (al-ityān wa al-majīʾ) here is figurative, referring to seeing (ruʾyah). It is also said that coming is one of Allah’s actions, which He Himself called coming. And it is said that the meaning of ‘then Allah comes to them’ is that some of Allah’s angels

[42][1] Al-Ghunyah li-Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq (1/187).

[43][2] Sharḥ Muslim (relevant section on verse interpretation).

come to them." [1][44]

Statements of the scholars regarding this

ʿUthmān al-Dārimī said:

"As for His coming on the Day of Resurrection and His approach in canopies of clouds and the angels — there is no disagreement among the ummah that He will indeed come to them in this manner on that Day, to hold them accountable, to judge between His creation, and to make them acknowledge their deeds.

But if you are truthful in this interpretation of yours and in what you claim of falsehood — and you are not — then bring a ḥadīth that supports your view. Otherwise, since when have the Jahmiyyah reached such a level of knowledge of the Book of Allāh and its interpretation that people must accept their statements regarding it?" [2][45]

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"This is closer to the view of the Jahmiyyah who say that

[44][1] Sharḥ Muslim (3/19).

[45][2] Al-Radd ʿalā al-Jahmiyyah by al-Dārimī, ed. al-Badr (p. 95).

Allāh does not come.” [1][46]

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“For indeed Allāh — Glorified is He — has testified to Himself that He rose over (the Throne), and that He comes and approaches — while the Jahmiyyah have testified to the opposite of that.” [2][47]

Ibn al-ʿUthaymīn said:

“And those people who distort (the meanings) claim that affirming such attributes implies deficiency — and for this reason they deny all action-based attributes (ṣifāt fiʿliyyah). They say: ‘He does not come, and He does not become pleased.’” [3][48]

Distorting the Meaning of ‘Right Hand of Allah’

Al-Nawawī said:

“Regarding his statement ﷺ: ‘…on the right hand of the

[46][1] Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Bidʿihim al-Kalāmiyyah (6/322).

[47][2] Madārij al-Sālikīn (4/471, ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm ed.).

[48][3] Majmūʿ Fatāwā wa Rasāʾil Ibn ʿUthaymīn (8/62).

Most Merciful' — some said: We believe in it without delving into its interpretation or knowing its meaning, but we hold that its apparent (literal) meaning is not intended, and that it has a meaning befitting Allāh.

The second view is that it is interpreted appropriately — and this is the view of most of the theologians (mutakallimīn).

Based on this, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ — may Allah be pleased with him — said: The meaning of 'being on the right' is the state of good standing and a high rank." [1][49]

Denying the True Vision (of Allāh)

Al-Nawawī said:

"Know that it is the unanimous position of Ahl al-Sunnah that the vision of Allāh, the Exalted, is possible and not rationally impossible, and they also unanimously agreed on its occurrence in the Hereafter — that the believers will see Allāh Almighty and not the disbelievers… Then, the doctrine of the people of truth is that the vision (of Allāh) is a power which Allāh Almighty places in His creation, and it does not require the connection of rays, nor the facing of the One seen, nor anything of that sort. Our imāms among the theologians have established this with clear evidences. It does not entail affirming direction for Allāh — Exalted is He above that — rather the believers

[49][1] Sharḥ Muslim (12/212).

will see Him without direction, just as they know Him without direction. [1][50]

Scholars' statements on this

Yaḥyā al-ʿImrānī (d. 558 AH) said:

“As for the evidence for invalidating the claim of the Ashʿarīs, it is that the Sharīʿah has come affirming the seeing of Allāh Almighty with the eyes, so it must be taken upon its well-known meaning — and that is what occurs through facing.” [2][51]

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“They said: ‘He is seen but not in a direction,’ while the majority of people among those who affirm the vision and those who deny it say that the statement of such people is known to be invalid by necessity of reason.” [3][52]

Ibn Abī al-ʿIzz al-Ḥanafī said:

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[50][1] Sharḥ Muslim (15/3).

[51][2] Al-Intiṣār fī al-Radd ʿalā al-Muʿtazilah al-Qadariyyah al-Ashrār (2/647).

[52][3] Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (2/329).

“And whoever says: ‘He is seen but not in a direction,’ let him review his intellect.” [1][53]

Al-Ghunaymān said:

“So they said: ‘He is seen but not in a direction,’ and the rational people laughed at them for that.” [2][54]

Al-Rājiḥī said:

“Thus, Allāh is seen but not in a direction — the people of truth responded: this is a deception from you, O Kullābiyyah and Ashʿarīs.” [3][55]

I (the author) said: And among what shows the Ashʿarīs’ denial of the vision in reality is that they deny (that Allāh has) a form; so how can they affirm seeing something that has no form?

Al-Sijzī (d. 444 AH) said:

“So when he says that He is seen with the eyes, it is not

[53][1] Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah, ed. al-Arnāʾūṭ (219/1).

[54][2] Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyyah by al-Ghunaymān (2/18).

[55][3] Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah by al-Rājiḥī (p. 120).

rationally possible that it be without facing (i.e., direction). And if he says that vision is not specific to sight (the eyes), then he has returned to the statement of the Muʿtazilah — thus vision became (to them) the same as knowledge." [1][56]

Ibn Jibrīn said:

"They said: 'He is seen but not in a direction,' because they deny direction. (They claim) He is seen without facing, or that the vision means manifestations or unveilings. So they affirmed the name (of vision) but did not affirm the reality — which is the believers' seeing their Lord in Paradise, just as you see the moon and do not crowd one another in seeing it." [2][57]

Al-Rājiḥī said:

"They say: 'He is seen but not in a direction' — this is irrational and inconceivable And for this reason it was said: the reality of their statement is the denial of vision." [3][58]

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[56][1] Risālat al-Sijzī ilā Ahl Zubayd fī al-radd ʿalā man ankara al-ḥarf wa al-ṣawt (p. 173).

[57][2] Fatāwā al-Shaykh Ibn Jibrīn (63/140).

[58][3] Sharḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah — al-Rājiḥī (3/12).

Al-Barrāk said:

“Their doctrine regarding vision — meaning the believers’ seeing their Lord on the Day of Resurrection — is that He, exalted is He, is seen but not in a direction. They do not say that the believers see Him from above them, nor with their eyes, nor in facing Him. All of this is based on denying His elevation, exalted is He. So the reality of their statement regarding vision aligns with those who deny it, like the Muʿtazilah.” [1][59]

I said: As for those who denied vision, what the scholars said regarding them:

Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah was asked: Busrā al-Marrīsī says: “Allāh will not be seen on the Day of Resurrection.” He said: “May Allah fight him, wretched one.” [2][60]

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said:

“Whoever says: ‘Allāh is not seen,’ he is a Kāfir.” [3][61]

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[59][1] Taʿlīqāt al-Shaykh al-Barrāk ʿalā al-Mukhālafāt al-ʿAqdiyyah fī Fatḥ al-Bārī (1/514).

[60][2] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marīsī — ed. al-Shawāmī (p. 29).

[61][3] Masāʾil al-Imām Aḥmad, narrated by Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (p. 353).

It was said to Imam Aḥmad: “A man narrated a ḥadīth from Abī al-ʿAṭūf, meaning that Allāh will not be seen in the Hereafter.” He said: “May Allah curse whoever narrates this ḥadīth today,” and then he said: “May Allah destroy this one.”[1][62]

Ibn Khuzaymah said:

“Allāh, exalted is He, will be seen by all the believers on the Day of Resurrection, both the righteous and the wicked, even if the noses of the Jahmiyyah — the deniers of the attributes of our Creator — turn up in objection.” [2][63]

Denial of the Ṣūrah (image)

Al-Nawawī said:

“His statement: ‘Allāh created ʿĀdam in His image’ — some scholars refrain from interpreting it and say: we believe it as true, and its apparent meaning is not intended; it has a meaning befitting Him. This is the doctrine of the majority of the Salaf, and it is the most cautious and safest approach.

[62][1] Masāʾil al-Imām Aḥmad, narrated by Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (p. 354).

[63][2] Al-Tawḥīd by Ibn Khuzaymah (406/2).

The second opinion: that it is interpreted according to what befits the transcendence of Allah, that He is not like anything… Al-Māzarī said: Ibn Qutaybah erred in this ḥadīth and interpreted it as Its apparent meaning, and he said: "Allāh, exalted is He, is a form unlike other forms." This, he said, is manifest corruption, because "form" implies composition, and every composite is created, and Allāh, exalted is He, is not created, so He is not composite and therefore not a form. He said: "This is like the statement of the anthropomorphists: 'a body unlike bodies'…"

The scholars differed in its interpretation. One group said: the pronoun in "His image" refers to the brother who was struck, which is the apparent meaning of the narration in Muslim. Another group said it refers to ʿĀdam, which is weak. Another group said it refers to Allāh, and the intended meaning is an attribution of honor and specificity, as in His statement: "the camel of Allāh," or as it is said of the Kaʿbah: "the House of Allāh," and similar expressions. [1][64]

Al-Nawawī said: His statement: "So Allāh comes to them in His image that they know" — the intended meaning of "image" here is attribute. Its meaning is that Allāh, exalted is He, manifests to them in the attribute by which

[64][1] Sharḥ Muslim (16/166).

they recognize Him, and they recognize Him by His attribute, even though they have not previously seen Him. They see Him as unlike any of His creation, and they know that He is unlike any of His creation, so they know He is their Lord and say: “You are our Lord,” and only the term “image” is used to express attribute due to its similarity and verbal congruence.” [1][65]

Scholars' statements on this

It was mentioned to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal that a man said, “He created him in His image.” He said: “In the image of clay,” and Aḥmad said: “This is the speech of the Jahmiyyah.” [2][66]

It was said to Aḥmad: “So-and-so says: in the image of man.” He said: “This is a lie; this is the statement of the Jahmiyyah, and what benefit is there in this?” [3][67]

Ibn Khuzaymah said: “The chapter on mentioning the image of our Lord, exalted is He, and the attribute of His

[65][1] Sharḥ Muslim (20/203).

[66][2] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (265/7).

[67][3] Ibtāl al-Taʾwīlāt (p. 102, Ṭ. Ghurās).

glorious face." [1][68]

Al-Karjī al-Qaṣṣāb said: "His statement: 'The heart did not believe what it saw' is a strong proof against the Jahmiyyah; there is no escape for them from it in affirming the image, which is known to Him from Himself." [2][69]

Ibn Taymiyyah said: "There is no doubt that for the Jahmiyyah… it is impossible that He could have appeared to them in a form, just as it is impossible that He could have manifested to them laughing… One of the two must be true: either what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ informed is the truth, or what these Jahmiyyah say, for they are in complete contradiction." [3][70]

Not Affirming the Face (Wajh)

In the ḥadīth of His veil of light, and in the narration of the Fire: "If it were uncovered, the splendors of His face would burn what His sight encompassed of His creation" — al-Nawawī said: "The intended meaning of the face is

[68][1] Al-Tawḥīd – Ibn Khuzaymah (1/45).

[69][2] Al-Nukat al-Dāllah ʿalā al-Bayān fī Anwāʿ al-ʿUlūm wa al-Aḥkām (4/210).

[70][3] Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Biḍʿihim al-Kalāmiyyah (7/97).

the Essence." [1][71]

Scholars' Statements on this

Imām Aḥmad said: "Among what is used as proof against the Jahmiyyah from the Qurʾān 'so that everything perishes except His Face; and the Face of your Lord, full of Majesty and Honor, will remain.'" [2][72]

Al-Dārimī said: "The most comprehensive refutation of what the Jahmiyyah deny of Allāh's attributes… begins with the Face." [3][73]

Ibn Khuzaymah said: "Regarding His statement: 'Everything perishes except His Face', some ignorant among the Jahmiyyah claimed that Allāh, ʿazza wa jall, only described Himself in this verse, referring to the Self to which He ascribed the Majesty." [4][74]

Ibn Baṭṭah said: "And the Jahmiyyah denied all of this,

[71][1] Sharḥ Muslim (3/14).

[72][2] Al-Sunnah li-ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Aḥmad (2/512).

[73][3] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – T. al-Shawāmī (72).

[74][4] Al-Tawḥīd – Ibn Khuzaymah (1/51).

and said: 'We do not say Allāh, taʿālā, has a Face.'" [1][75]

Ibn Baṭṭah also said: "Beware, my brothers, may Allāh have mercy on you, of the doctrines of the Jahmiyyah, enemies of Allāh, for they are people of clear polytheism and disbelief; and know that their doctrines include types of kufr and encompass extreme, vile forms of heresy and they denied that Allāh, taʿālā, has a Face, with His statement: 'and the Face of your Lord, full of Majesty and Honor, will remain.'" [2][76]

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī said: "As for the Face, the Muʿtazilah had two opinions regarding it: one of them, Abu al-Hudhayl, said: 'The Face of Allāh is Allāh Himself.' Another said: the meaning of His statement 'and the Face of your Lord will remain' is that your Lord remains without a Face being affirmed." [3][77]

Distortion of the Ṣifat of Beauty (jamāl Allāh).

Al-Nawawī said: "Regarding His statement 'Indeed, Allāh

[75][1] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (7/269).

[76][2] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (6/133).

[77][3] Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn – T. Zarzūr (1/174).

is beautiful and loves beauty', there was disagreement over its meaning. It was said: its meaning is that all of His affairs, subḥānahu wa taʿālā, are good and beautiful, and that He has the Most Beautiful Names and the attributes of beauty and perfection. Others said: beautiful (jamīl) is used in a general sense, like 'noble' and 'hearing' (samīʿ) as 'honorable' and 'perceiving,...'

Imām Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī said its meaning is majestic (jalīl). Imām Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī said it means 'possessor of light and radiance,' i.e., master of both. Others said it means beautiful in His actions." [1][78]

Scholars' statements on this

ʿAbdullāh Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal said: "Muhannā Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Sulamī narrated to me: I asked ʿAlī ibn al-Jaʿd about the ḥadīth of Abū Rayḥānah from the Prophet ﷺ: 'Indeed, Allāh is beautiful and loves beauty', but he refused to say: 'Indeed, Allāh is beautiful and loves beauty,' and said: 'He loves beauty.'" [2][79] Imām Muslim described ʿAlī ibn al-Jaʿd as trustworthy, "yet he is a Jahmī." [3][80]

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[78][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/90)

[79][2] Al-Sunnah – ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad (1/279)

[80][3] Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ – Ṭ. al-Risālah (10/466)

Denial of the eye (ʿayn)

Al-Nawawī said: “His statement: ‘Indeed, Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, is not one-eyed. Indeed, the False Messiah (al-Masīḥ ad-Dajjāl) is one-eyed in the right eye’ means that Allāh, taʿālā, is free from characteristics of creation and all deficiencies.” [1][81]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Dārimī said: “In the explanation of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ — ‘Indeed, Allāh is not one-eyed’ — there is clarification that Allāh, i.e. Allāh Himself, is Seeing and possesses two eyes, unlike the one-eyed.” [2][82]

Ibn Khuzaymah said: “How could it be permissible for a Muslim — if the Jahmiyyah were even considered Muslims — to accuse those who affirm for Allāh an eye of tashbīh (anthropomorphism)?” [3][83]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “He (the Prophet ﷺ) mentioned the

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[81][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/236)

[82][2] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – ed. al-Almaʿī (1/327)

[83][3] Al-Tawḥīd – Ibn Khuzaymah (1/117)

Dajjāl and that he is one-eyed, and said: 'Indeed, your Lord is not one-eyed,' thus affirming for Him two eyes." [1][84]

Al-Barrāk said: "As for his statement, 'and that is by way of example and approximation to understanding, not in the sense of affirming a physical organ' — its meaning is to deny the reality of the eye for Allāh, the Exalted. This is the view of the muʿaṭṭilah from among the Jahmiyyah and Muʿtazilah, and those who agreed with them among the Ashʿarīs." [2][85]

I say: If the matter were as al-Nawawī claimed, it would be a criticism of the Prophet's explanation.

Distortion of the Attribute of sight (al-Naẓar)

Al-Nawawī said: "The meaning of 'He will not look at them' is that He will turn away from them. His looking at His servants signifies His mercy and kindness towards

[84][1] Ijtimāʿ al-Juyūsh al-Islāmiyyah (p. 463, Ṭ. ʿAṭāʾāt al-ʿIlm)

[85][2] Taʿlīqāt al-Shaykh al-Barrāk ʿalā al-Mukhālafāt al-ʿAqdiyyah fī Fatḥ al-Bārī (13/390)

them.” [1][86]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Dārimī said: “Then the opponent summarized what the Jahmiyyah deny from the attributes [of Allāh], mentioning among them: ‘Allāh will not speak to them, nor look at them.’” [2][87]

Al-Karajī al-Qaṣṣāb said: “And His saying, ‘Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of Allāh and their oaths for a small price — those will have no share in the Hereafter, and Allāh will not speak to them nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection — a proof against the Jahmiyyah regarding speech and looking. [3][88]

Denial of the Hand (al-Yad)

Al-Nawawī said: “His saying, ‘Rather, both His hands are outstretched,’ means: both His blessings — interpreting the hand here as blessing.” [4][89]

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[86][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/116)

[87][2] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – ed. al-Shawwāmī (p. 72)

[88][3] al-Nukat al-Dāllah ʿalā al-Bayān fī Anwāʿ al-ʿUlūm wa-al-Aḥkām (1/220)

[89][4] Sharḥ Muslim (8/87)

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Dārimī said: “Al-Marrīsī and his companions also claimed that the hand of Allāh means His blessing.” [1][90]

Ibn Khuzaymah said: “The Jahmiyyah al-Muʿaṭṭilah claimed that the meaning of His saying, ‘Rather, both His hands are outstretched,’ is: both His blessings. This is distortion, not interpretation.” [2][91]

Ibn Baṭṭah said: “The Jahmiyyah said: the meaning of hand is blessing.” [3][92]

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “The Jahmiyyah among the followers of various religions interpret hand as blessing and power.” [4][93]

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī said: “The Muʿtazilah denied all of that except the face, and they interpreted hand to mean

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[90][1] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – ed. al-Almaʿī (1/284)

[91][2] Kitāb al-Tawḥīd by Ibn Khuzaymah (1/197)

[92][3] al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (7/316)

[93][4] Taḥqīq al-Qawl fī Masʾalat: ʿĪsā Kalimat Allāh wa-al-Qurʾān Kalām Allāh (p. 35)

blessing.” [1][94]

In the commentary on the ḥadīth: ‘Allāh will fold up the heavens on the Day of Resurrection, then take them in His right hand,’ al-Nawawī said: “As for the expression ‘the two hands of Allāh’, it is interpreted as power, and it is metaphorically expressed as hands because our actions are done with our hands. Thus, we are addressed in a way we can understand so that the meaning is clearer and more firmly established in our minds. The mention of right and left is to complete the example — for we take with our right hand what we honor, and with our left what is of lesser rank.” [2][95]

Al-Nawawī said: His statement, “and He wrote for you with His hand” — regarding the word “hand” here, there are the two previously mentioned views:

The first — to believe in it without delving into its interpretation, while holding that its apparent meaning is not intended.

The second — to interpret it as referring to power. [3][96]

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[94][1] Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn, ed. Zarzūr (1/173)

[95][2] Sharḥ Muslim (17/132)

[96][3] Sharḥ Muslim (16/200)

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Tirmidhī said: “As for the Jahmiyyah, they denied these narrations and said: ‘This is tashbīh (anthropomorphism).’ Yet Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, has mentioned in more than one place in His Book hand, hearing, and sight. The Jahmiyyah interpreted these verses and explained them contrary to what the people of knowledge explained, saying: ‘Indeed, Allāh did not create Ādam with His hand,’ and saying: ‘The meaning of hand here is power.’” [1][97]

Ibn Khuzaymah said: “Some of the Jahmiyyah claimed that the meaning of His saying ‘Allāh created Ādam with His two hands’ is ‘by His power,’ and claimed that hand means power. This, too, is alteration (tabdīl), and it shows ignorance of the Arabic language.” [2][98]

He also said: “The affirmation of the Hand of Allah, majestic is His praise, is established by an authentic Sunnah from the Prophet ﷺ — clarifying that Allah Himself wrote the Torah with His Hand for His interlocutor Mūsā — even if the noses of the Jahmiyyah be rubbed in the dust.” [3] [99]

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[97][1] Sunan al-Tirmidhī (3/42), ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir

[98][2] Kitāb al-Tawḥīd by Ibn Khuzaymah (1/199)

[99][3] Kitāb al-Tawḥīd by Ibn Khuzaymah (1/126)

Muḥammad Anwar Shāh al-Kashmīrī said: “As for interpreting ‘hand’ as power or strength, al-Tirmidhī said that this is the doctrine of the Jahmiyyah.” [1][100]

Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nuʿmān said: “It must not be said that His hand means His power or His blessing, for that would nullify the attribute — and this is the saying of the Qadariyyah and the Muʿtazilah.” [2][101]

Al-Nawawī said: “His statement regarding Ādam — ‘Allāh created you with His hand and breathed into you from His spirit’ — is from the category of an attribution of honour.” [3][102]

I (the author) say: Meaning, He did not actually create him with His hand, but rather by His power; however, He said ‘He created him with His hands’ as a way of honouring him.

He said: “His statement ‘and both His hands are right’ is to indicate that what is meant by ‘right’ is not a limb —

[100][1] al-ʿArf al-Shadhī Sharḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī (2/128)

[101][2] al-Fiqh al-Akbar (p. 27)

[102][3] Sharḥ Muslim (3/55)

exalted is Allāh above that — for such is impossible concerning Him, Glorified and Exalted be He." [1][103]

I (the author) say: The theologians (ahl al-kalām) call the real hand a limb (jāriḥah).

Al-Dārimī said: "As for your repetition and exaggeration against us with [terms like] limbs and bodily parts — this is not what a Muslim says." [2][104]

In the ḥadīth: 'Indeed Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, extends His hand by night so that the sinner of the day may repent, and extends His hand by day so that the sinner of the night may repent,' al-Nawawī said: "The extension of the hand here is a metaphor for accepting repentance." [3][105]

And he said: "His statement 'and all good is in Your hands' — the meaning of 'in Your hands' is 'with You'." [4][106]

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[103][1] Sharḥ Muslim (12/212).

[104][2] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – ed. al-Shawwāmī (p. 272).

[105][3] Sharḥ Muslim (17/76).

[106][4] Sharḥ Muslim (3/97).

Denial of Grasping (qabḍ)

Al-Nawawī said: His statement “He will grasp a handful of fire” means: He collects it together. [1][107]

Scholars' Statements on this

Ibn Baṭṭah said: “The Jahmiyyah said: The meaning of His statement ‘and the whole earth is in His grasp on the Day of Resurrection’ is like saying: ‘the house is in so-and-so’s grasp’, meaning it is under his possession. The accursed Jahmī — what he uttered was only from his ignorance of the Arabic language and from his deviation from the clear path.” [2][108]

Denial of the Fingers (aṣābiʿ)

Al-Nawawī said: His statement ‘the hearts of the children of Adam are all between two fingers of the Fingers of the Most Merciful, like one heart, which He directs wherever He wills’ — this is from the ḥadīths of the Attributes, and the two previous opinions are close to it; one is to believe in them without seeking interpretation or knowing the meaning, but to believe that it is true and that its apparent wording is not the intended meaning, and Allāh

[107][1] Sharḥ Muslim (3/32).

[108][2] al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (7/316)

taʿālā said: “Nothing is like Him”. The second opinion: it is to be interpreted according to what befits Him; according to this, the intended meaning is metaphorical, as when it is said: “So-and-so is in my grasp” or “in my hand”, it is not meant that he is literally in the hand, rather the meaning is under my power. And it is said: “So-and-so is between my fingers, I turn him however I wish”, meaning he is under my control and I dispose of him as I will. Thus, the meaning of the ḥadīth is that Allāh controls the hearts of His servants and other things as He wills; nothing is impossible for Him, and nothing escapes what He intends, just as nothing is impossible for a person regarding what is between his fingers. The Arabs were addressed in a way they could understand, and it was likened to sensory meanings to make it clearer in their minds. If one says: “But Allāh’s power is one, and the two fingers indicate duality”, the answer is that this is metaphor and simile, using representation in a way they are accustomed to; duality and plurality are not intended. Allāh knows best. [1][109]

Al-Nawawī said: His statement “Indeed, Allāh holds the heavens on one finger and the earths on one finger, then He shakes them” — this is from the ḥadīths of the Attributes, and the two opinions have already been mentioned: interpretation, and accepting it with faith while believing that its apparent wording is not the

[109][1] Sharḥ Muslim (16/204)

intended meaning. [1][110]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Dārimī said: “The opponent summarized what the Jahmiyyah deny from the Attributes of Allāh… and [among them] the fingers.” [2][111]

Ibn Baṭṭah said: “The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘The heart of the son of ʿĀdam is between two fingers from the Fingers of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic.’ Then Bishr said: ‘These Jahmiyyah find this to be a tremendous thing [to affirm].’” [3][112]

Ibn Taymiyyah said regarding the statement: ‘The hearts of the servants are between two fingers from the Fingers of the Most Merciful’ — Imām Aḥmad explicitly rejected the interpretation of the Jahmiyyah concerning it. [4][113]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “The One who places the heavens

[110][1] Sharḥ Muslim (12/129)

[111][2] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī – ed. al-Shawwāmī (p. 72).

[112][3] al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (7/278).

[113][4] Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Biḍʿihim al-Kalāmiyyah (6/172).

upon a Finger of His Fingers, and the earth upon a Finger, and the mountains upon a Finger, and the trees upon a Finger, then He shakes them, then says: 'I am the King!' — may Allāh fight the Jahmiyyah and the Muʿaṭṭilah! Where is the anthropomorphism in this?" [1][114]

Denial of the Shin (Sāq)

Al-Nawawī said: His statement: (fayunkašif ʿan sāq)… was explained by Ibn ʿAbbās, the majority of the linguists, and the rarities of the ḥadīth that the sāq here means severity — that is, it uncovers a great severity and a tremendous matter. This is like an expression Arabs use to signify intensity. Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, may Allāh have mercy on him, said: "It is said that the sāq here refers to a great light, and this was narrated in a ḥadīth from the Prophet ﷺ." Ibn Fūrak said: "Its meaning is what is renewed for the believers upon seeing Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, from benefits and subtleties." Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ said: "It may also be a sign between Him and the believers by the appearance of a group of angels of mighty creation… or it may be a created sāq that Allāh made as a sign for the believers, outside the usual order. Or it may mean the removal of fear and terror from them." [2][115]

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[114][1] Madārij al-Sālikīn (3/335, Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī).

[115][2] Sharḥ Muslim (27/3).

He also said: “His statement: (fa-dhālika yawm yukšaf ʿan sāq) — the scholars explained its meaning. And the meaning of what is in the Qurʾān, ‘the day the sāq is uncovered’, is the day of great intensity and tremendous horror — that is, it appears. It is said: ‘the war uncovered its shin’ when it intensified.” [1][116]

Scholars' Statements on this

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “There is no doubt that for the Jahmiyyah it is impossible that they follow Allāh, just as it is impossible that He is the One Who comes, just as it is impossible that He has come to them in a form, just as it is impossible that He manifests to them laughing, and just as it is impossible that He uncovers His shin.” [2][117]

I say: As for the words of Ibn ʿAbbās, that is because his recitation differs from the well-known recitation yawm yukshaf ʿan sāq; rather, he recited yawm takshifu ʿan sāq. [3][118]

According to his recitation, the uncovering of the shin is the Day of Resurrection; according to this, its

[116][1] Sharḥ Muslim (77/18).

[117][2] Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī Taʾsīs Bidʿihim al-Kalāmiyyah (97/7).

[118][3] Maʿānī al-Qurʾān lil-Farrāʾ (177/3) – ʾIʿrāb al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ wa ʿIlaluhā, Ṭ. al-ʿIlmiyyah (p. 455).

interpretation follows.

As for the uncovering of the shin of the Lord of the worlds, it has come clearly and explicitly. It was narrated by al-Bukhārī and others from Abū Saʿīd, may Allāh be pleased with him, who said: “I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ‘Our Lord will uncover His shin, and every believing man and woman will prostrate to Him.’” [1][119]

Denial of the Leg and the Foot (rajal and qadam)

Al-Nawawī said: “Hell will continue to say ‘Is there any more?’ until the Lord of Might, Blessed and Exalted, places His foot in it, and it says ‘Enough! Enough!’ Previously, the scholars have explained the differences regarding this according to two madhhabs.

The first, which is the view of the majority of the Salaf and a group of the mutakallimīn, is that one does not speak regarding its interpretation; rather, we believe that it is true as Allāh intended, and it has a meaning befitting Him, and its apparent meaning is not intended.

The second, which is the view of the majority of the

[119][1] al-Bukhārī (4919).

mutakallimīn, is that it is to be interpreted according to what befits Him. Accordingly, they differed regarding the interpretation of this hadith: it was said that the Qadam here means “the foremost,” which is common in the language, and its meaning is that Allāh places therein His Qadam from the people of punishment… Second: that what is meant is the foot of some of the creatures, so the pronoun in ‘His foot’ refers to that known creature. Third: that it is possible that among the creatures there is what is called by this name.

As for the narration which says “Allāh places His foot therein,” “Imam” (of the Ashʿarīs) Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak claimed that it is not established among the people of transmission, but it has been narrated by Muslim and others, and it is authentic. Its interpretation is as previously explained regarding the foot. It is also permissible that by “the foot” is meant a group of people, as is said: “a foot of locusts,” meaning a portion of them. The judge said: the most apparent of the interpretations is that they are a people who deserve it and were created for it. They said: it must be diverted from its apparent meaning.

The standing (al-Qiyām) is the definitive rational proof of the impossibility of a limb for Allāh, Blessed and Exalted (1)[120]

[120][1] Sharḥ Muslim (17/182).

Scholars' Statements on this

Aḥmad was asked: “A newly informed person narrated to me a hadith (Allāh, the Most Merciful, places His foot therein) and a young boy was present.” He turned to the boy and said: “This has an interpretation,” and Abū ʿAbd Allāh said: “Look at him as you would say regarding the Jahmiyyah, the same.” (1)[121] Abū Yaʿlā said he explicitly declared the statement as Jahmī, and he declared some of them kafir for some of their statements but did not declare them kafir for others. [2][122]

Ibn Khuzaymah said: “The chapter on affirming the ‘foot’ for Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, despite the noses of the Muʿaṭṭilah Jahmiyyah who deny the attributes of our Creator, Blessed and Exalted.” (3)[123]

Distortion of the Attribute of Laughter (ḍaḥik)

Al-Nawawī said: “As for His saying: ‘He manifests Himself to them laughing,’ the meaning is that he manifests himself while laughing, that is, He appears

[121][1] Ibṭāl al-Taʾwīlāt (p. 84, Ṭ. Ghurās).

[122][2] Ibṭāl al-Taʾwīlāt (p. 84, Ṭ. Ghurās).

[123][3] Al-Tawḥīd by Ibn Khuzaymah (1/202).

while being pleased with them. ”[1][124]

Scholars' Statements on this

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said about a person: “It was reported from him that he mentioned the hadith of laughter, and said: ‘Like the crop when it laughs,’ and this is the speech of the Jahmiyyah” (2)[125]

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, a young boy named Thaʿlab, was asked by Ibn Baṭṭah about the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: “Our Lord laughed at the despair of His servants and at their closeness to others,” and he said: “The hadith is well-known, its narration is Sunnah, and objecting to it by criticizing it is an innovation, and interpreting the laughter is a contrivance and falsehood” (3)[126]

Al-Ājurrī said: “‘Your Lord, Blessed and Exalted, laughs at them’ … and none would reject these Sunnahs except one who follows the path of the Muʿtazilah; whoever opposes or rejects it, or asks: ‘How?’ should be accused and

[124][1] Sharḥ Muslim (3/48).

[125][2] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (111/7).

[126][3] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (112/7).

beware of him” [1][127]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: Abū Razīn said: “We will never lack from our Lord that which is good and causes laughter,” and the Jahmī, if asked about that, would say: “It is not permissible for Him to laugh, just as it is not permissible for Him to be established (al-istiwāʾ), to descend (al-nuzūl), to incarnate (al-inyān), or to come (al-majīʾ)” (2)[128]

Ibn Abī al-ʿIzz said: “Let him persist in listening to the Prophetic ḥadīths, for in them, along with affirming the vision, is that He speaks to whomever He wills, when He wills, and that He comes to judge on the Day of Resurrection, that He is above the world, that He calls them with a voice heard by those near and those far, that He manifests to His servants, that He laughs, and other attributes whose hearing is, for the Jahmī, like thunderbolts” (3)[129]

Distortion of the Attributes of Anger, Wrath, Pleasure, and Joy (ghaḍab,

[127][1] Al-Sharīʿah by al-Ājurrī (2/1069).

[128][2] Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Mursalā ʿalā al-Jahmiyyah wa al-Muʿaṭṭilah (p. 540).

[129][3] Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah, edited by al-Arnāʾūṭ (1/218).

sakhaṭ, riḍā, farah)

Al-Nawawī said: “What is meant by the anger of Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, is what appears of His retribution upon those who disobey Him, and what they see of His severe punishment, and what the people of the assembly witness of horrors that have never occurred and will never occur again. There is no doubt that all this had no precedent before that Day and will have no precedent after it. This is the meaning of Allāh’s anger, just as His pleasure is the manifestation of His mercy, and His kindness to whomever He wills for good and honor. ”[1][130]

And the description of anger and pleasure as changeable, so he said: “Because it is impossible for change to occur in Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, in His anger and pleasure” (2)[131]

And he said: “His saying, Blessed is He, ‘Indeed, My mercy prevails over My anger’ — the scholars said: Allāh’s anger and pleasure return to the meaning of His will. His will to reward the obedient and benefit the servant is called pleasure and mercy, and His will to punish the disobedient and forsake them is called anger, and His will, Blessed and Exalted, is an eternal attribute through which

[130][1] Sharḥ Muslim (3/68).

[131][2] Continuation of the previous reference.

all volitions are intended" (1)[132]

And he said: "The scholars said: turning away, anger, and wrath from Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, is His will to distance the one upon whom He is angry from His mercy, to punish them, to reject their actions, and to censure them, and Allāh knows best" (2)[133]

Distortion of the attribute of joy

Al-Nawawī said: His saying, "Allāh is more joyful at the repentance of His servant than one of you who finds his lost camel in the desert," the scholars said: Allāh's joy is His pleasure [3][134]

Scholars' Statements on this

Ḥammād ibn Zayd said: "These are the Jahmiyyah. They were asked: 'Do you have a Lord?' They said: 'Yes.' They were asked: 'Does He speak?' They said: 'No.' They were asked: 'Does He have a hand?' They said: 'No.' They were asked: 'Does He have a foot?' They said: 'No.' They were asked: 'Does He have a finger?' They said: 'No.' They were

[132][1] Sharḥ Muslim (17/68).

[133][2] Sharḥ Muslim (2/162).

[134][3] Sharḥ Muslim (17/60).

asked: ‘Then does He feel pleasure and anger?’ They said: ‘No.’ They were asked: ‘Then you have no Lord.’” [1][135]

Al-Dārimī said: “The most complete refutation is what denies the Jahmiyyah from the attributes of Allāh… and he began with the face, then with hearing and sight, and anger and pleasure” [2][136]

Ibn Baṭṭah said: “The chapter on belief that Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, becomes angry, is pleased, loves, and hates. The Shaykh said: The Jahmī denies all these attributes, rejects the text of the revelation and the authentic Sunnah, and claims that Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, does not become angry, does not become pleased, does not love, and does not hate. Indeed, his denial of these attributes is a rejection of the One described by them, and Allāh, Exalted, has indeed exposed the lie of the Jahmī and humiliated him.” [3][137]

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “As for affirming this regarding Allāh, Exalted, it is based on the meaning of Allāh’s love, pleasure, anger, wrath, and joy at the repentance of the

[135][1] Sharḥ Madhāhib Ahl al-Sunnah, Ibn Shāhīn (p. 34).

[136][2] Naqḍ al-Dārimī ʿalā al-Marrīsī - Shawwāmī (p. 72).

[137][3] al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (127/7).

penitent, and the like, which has been elaborated elsewhere. Are these attributes other than His will, as agreed upon by the Salaf and the Imāms, or are they the very will itself, as some of the Muʿtazilah and Jahmiyyah and those who follow them say?" [1][138]

Distortion of the attribute of ʿAjab (Astonishment)

ʿIyāḍ's words were cited, using as evidence his saying: "Allāh is astonished at what you did to your guest this night." Al-Qāḍī said: The meaning of astonishment from Allāh is His pleasure in that. It may also mean that the angels of Allāh were astonished, and Allāh, Exalted, attributed it to Himself as an honor. [2][139]

Scholars' Statements on this

Zanīj said: "I heard Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (al-Muqriʾ) say: It pleases me to recite, "Rather, I was astonished, and they mock" — contrary to the Jahmī. "[3][140]

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[138][1] al-Radd ʿalā al-Manṭiqiyyīn (p. 422).

[139][2] Sharḥ Muslim (13/14).

[140][3] Ṣifāt Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn – Ibn al-Muḥibb al-Ṣāmit (3/304).

Ibn Baṭṭah said: “The chapter on faith in ʿAstonishment. And the Jahmīyyah said: Indeed, Allāh does not become astonished.” [1][141]

I said: They distort ʿajab (astonishment) to mean pleasure, and pleasure is distorted for them to mean the manifestation of His mercy. This, indeed, is something truly astonishing. And how can a sane person accept that Allāh’s astonishment means the angels’ astonishment? Allāh is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs.

His belief that the Divine Will (irādah) is one and the same for all willed things

Al-Nawawī said: “And His will, Exalted, is an eternal attribute by which He wills all volitions. ” [2][142]

Scholars' Statements on this

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “There exists in the speech of a group of later scholars who took from al-Kullābīyyah: that

[141][1] al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (131/7).

[142][2] Sharḥ Muslim (17/68).

He has only one will. [1][143] He said: “Those who said that He wills all volitions by one will merely took it from Ibn Kullāb, and the majority of the rational scholars said: This is necessarily a manifest corruption, to the extent that even among the most virtuous of dialecticians, some deny that any sane person would accept this. ” [2][144]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: “They made the will one in essence, and the will to create something is the very will to destroy it, the will to move it is the very will to still it, and the will to preserve it is the very will to annihilate it. Only the relations differ. ” [3][145]

Al-Harrās said: “And the Ashʿarīs affirm a single, eternal will, which was related in eternity to all volitions, so it necessarily follows for them that the volition is separate from the will. ” [4][146]

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[143][1] Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (17/163).

[144][2] Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (17/158).

[145][3] Al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Mursalā ʿalā al-Jahmīyah wa al-Muʿaṭṭilah – Ṭ Abṭāʿāt al-ʿIlm (1/144).

[146][4] Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Wāsiṭīyyah – al-Harrās (p. 99).

His statement regarding the Qurʾān

I did not find for him any clear words on this matter, though he said: “So, believing that the Speech of Allāh, Exalted is He, and His Revelation are unlike the speech of the creation, and that none of the creation can produce anything like it — then honoring it and reciting it with its due recitation. ” [1][147]

And he deemed those who say that the Qurʾān is created to be innovators, not disbelievers, saying:

“As for one who says that the Qurʾān is created, he is an innovator. Our companions differed concerning his disbelief… al-Qaffāl and many of our companions said: it is permissible to pray behind one who says that the Qurʾān is created, and others among the people of innovation. The author of al-ʿUddah said: this is the correct view. (I say:) And this is the correct position. … The Imām, ḥāfiẓ, and jurist Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī and others among our verified companions interpreted what was transmitted from al-Shāfiʿī and other scholars concerning the takfīr of one who says the Qurʾān is created — that what is meant is ingratitude for the blessing (kufrān al-niʿmah), not disbelief that expels from the religion. ” [2][148]

[147][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/38).

[148][2] Al-Majmūʿ (4/253, Ṭ. al-Manīriyyah).

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Dārimī said:

“We also declare them disbelievers with a well-known disbelief — their denial of what the Book has stated. Allāh, Blessed and Exalted, has informed that the Qurʾān is His Speech, while the Jahmiyyah have claimed that He created it.” [1][149]

Ḥarb al-Kirmānī said:

“This is the creed of the Imāms of knowledge, the people of ḥadīth, and the Ahl al-Sunnah who are known for it and whose example is followed in it. I met those I met among the scholars of the people of Iraq, the Ḥijāz, al-Shām, and others — all upon it. Whoever opposes anything from these doctrines, or criticizes them, or disparages those who hold them, is an innovator, outside the community, deviating from the way of the Sunnah and the path of truth. It is the madhhab of Aḥmad, Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mukhallad, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī, Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, and others from whom we sat and took knowledge. Among their statements [2][150] was: ‘The Qurʾān is the Speech of Allāh, He spoke it, it is not created. Whoever claims that the Qurʾān is created is a Jahmī

[149][1] Al-Radd ʿalā al-Jahmiyyah by al-Dārimī – ed. al-Badr (p. 200).

[150][2] Masāʾil Ḥarb al-Kirmānī (3/967).

disbeliever.’” [1][151]

Al-Lālikāʾī devoted a section in his book titled: The Transmission of What Has Been Narrated from Those Who Issued Fatwā Concerning Whoever Says, ‘The Quran is Created’ — [i.e., on declaring such a person a disbeliever].

Among the jurists who held this view were:

Mālik ibn Anas, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā, Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah.

And among the caliphs: Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr.

And among others:

Muʿtamir ibn Sulaymān al-Taymī, Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, Muʿādh ibn Muʿādh, Wakīʿ ibn al-Jarrāḥ and his father, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Dāwūd al-Khuraybī, ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim, Shabābah ibn Sawwār, Abū al-Naḍr Hāshim ibn al-Qāsim, Ḥammād ibn Masʿadah, ʿAffān ibn Muslim, Abū Muṣʿab Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Zuhrī, Ḥajjāj ibn al-Minhāl, Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥunaynī, Muʿāwiyah ibn ʿAmr, Bishr ibn al-Walīd, Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, Abū Thawr Muḥammad ibn Bashār,

[151][1] Masāʾil Ḥarb al-Kirmānī (3/975).

ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-ʿAnbarī, and Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Quṭ̔ī. [1][152]

Then [al-Lālikāʾī] transmitted from them.

Then he titled a chapter:

"Those who said: 'He neither inherits nor is inherited from'" —

Among them were: Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, Muḥammad ibn Muqātil al-ʿAbbādānī, Muḥammad ibn Abī Ṣafwān, and Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. [2] [153]

Then he transmitted from them with his chains.

Then he titled another chapter:

"Whoever said: 'His wife is divorced…'" —

ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak said: "I have heard the people, for forty-nine years, saying: 'Whoever says that the Qurʾān is created, his wife is divorced three times irrevocably.'

I said: 'And why is that?'

He replied: 'Because his wife is a Muslim woman, and a

[152][1] Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah (2/345)

[153][2] Sharḥ Uṣūl I'tiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah (2/353)

Muslim woman cannot remain under a disbeliever.' [1][154]

Then he titled a chapter:

'They are not to be married, nor is prayer to be performed behind them, nor are their sick to be visited, nor their funerals attended; indeed, the bond of Islamic allegiance between them and the Muslims has been severed.'

And it was narrated from: Sallām ibn Abī Muṭīʿ, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Abū Ḍumrah Anas ibn ʿIyāḍ, Abū Muʿāwiyah al-Ḍarīr, Yazīd ibn Zurayʿ, Yazīd ibn Hārūn, Ḥātim ibn Ismāʿīl, Ibn ʿUlayyah, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī, Qabīṣah ibn ʿUqbah, Ḥajjāj ibn al-Minhāl, ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿĀʾishah, Fiṭr ibn Ḥammād, Muʿallā ibn Manṣūr al-Rāzī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Rabīʿ ibn Sulaymān al-Murādī. [2][155]

Then he transmitted from them with his chains.

I say: Can such rulings pertain merely to disbelief in blessings (i.e., kufr al-niʿmah)?

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[154][1] Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah (2/354)

[155][2] Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah (2/354)

His stance on Īmān

Irjāʾ — and the denial that deeds are an integral part of īmān

Al-Nawawī commented on the ḥadīth of the slave girl: “In it is evidence that whoever affirms the two testimonies (shahādatayn) and firmly believes in them, that suffices for the validity of his īmān, and for him to be among the people of the qiblah and Paradise.” [1][156]

I say: It may be objected that he affirmed actions as part of īmān in what he transmitted from Ibn Baṭṭāl, agreeing with him.

Al-Nawawī said: “The doctrine of the people of Sunnah — both the early and later generations — is that īmān is speech and action; it increases and decreases.” [2][157]

The answer: This statement is general; it indicates that actions are part of īmān, but it is not a clear assertion that they are a pillar of it. His earlier words are detailed, explicit, and clearly state that, īmān is valid without

[156][1] Sharḥ Muslim (5/25).

[157][2] Sharḥ Muslim (1/146).

actions, meaning that deeds are not a pillar of īmān — and this is the saying of the Murjiʾah.

As for the saying of Ahl al-Sunnah, it is as Sufyān al-Thawrī said: “Speech is not valid except with action.” [1][158]

Scholars' Statements on this

Sufyān al-Thawrī said: “Speech is not valid except with action.” [2][159]

Muḥammad Ibn Muslim al-Ṭāʾifī said:“Speech is not sound except with action.” [3][160]

Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ said to me: “Speech is not valid except with action.” [4][161]

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[158][1] Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah (1/171).

[159][2] Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamāʿah (1/171).

[160][3] Al-Sunnah by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad (1/337).

[161][4] Al-Sunnah by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad (1/337).

Sufyān Ibn ʿUyaynah said: “We took this from those before us — that faith is speech and action, and that speech is not valid except with action.” [1][162]

ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn said: “I heard Muḥammad ibn Muqātil say: I asked Wakīʿ — there are people among us who say faith does not increase.

He replied: These are the wicked Murjiʾah, and the people of faith said: “A statement is not sufficient except with action.” [2][163]

Al-Awzāʿī said: “Faith is not upright except with speech, and speech and faith are not upright except with action.” [3][164]

Ḥarb al-Kirmānī said: “This is the madhhab (creed) of the Imāms of knowledge, the people of ḥadīth, and the Ahl al-Sunnah who are known for it and followed in it. I met those I met among the scholars of Iraq, the Ḥijāz, and al-Shām and others — all upon this. So whoever opposes anything of these beliefs, or criticizes them, or finds fault with those who hold them, is an innovator, outside the

[162][1] Al-Sunnah by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad (1/346).

[163][2] Dhamm al-Kalām wa-Ahlihi (3/126).

[164][3] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā by Ibn Baṭṭah (2/807).

community, deviating from the path of the Sunnah and the way of truth. It is the madhhab of Aḥmad (ibn Ḥanbal), Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mukhallad, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī, Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, and others from whom we took knowledge. Among their sayings was: Whoever claims that faith is speech without action is a Murjiʾī." [1][165]

The issue of Istithnāʾ

Al-Nawawī said:

"Scholars differed among the salaf and others regarding a person saying: 'I am a believer.' A group said: he should not say 'I am a believer' exclusively, but rather say 'I am a believer, in shāʾ Allāh.' This view was narrated by some of our scholars from most of our mutakallimīn. Others allowed saying it absolutely, without adding 'in shāʾ Allāh,' which is the preferred view and the opinion of the people of truth. Al-Awzāʿī and others allowed both options. All are correct according to different considerations. Whoever said it absolutely, he looked at the present condition and the rulings of faith applied to him at that time. Whoever said 'in shāʾ Allāh,' they said it was either for blessing or considering the outcome and what Allāh wills, since he does not know whether he will remain upon faith or be diverted from it. The option of choice is good and correct, taking into account the premises of the

[165][1] Masāʾil Ḥarb al-Kirmānī (3/968).

first two views and lifting the reality of the disagreement." [1][166]

Scholars' Statements on this

Ḥarb al-Karmānī said:

"This is the view of the imāms of knowledge, the narrators of āthār, and the people of Sunnah known for it and followed in it. I met scholars from ʿIrāq, the Ḥijāz, al-Shām, and others upon it. Whoever opposed any of these views, criticized them, or disparaged their proponents is an innovator, outside the Jamāʿah, removed from the path of Sunnah and the way of truth. This is the view of Aḥmad, Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Mukhald (Ibn Rāhūyah), ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī, Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, and others from whom we studied and learned. Their statement was: īmān is speech, action, intention, and adherence to the Sunnah; īmān increases and decreases, and our Sunnah regarding īmān is a continuous Sunnah from the scholars. If a man is asked, 'Are you a believer?' he says, 'I am a believer, in shāʾ Allāh,' or 'I hope I am a believer,' or he says: 'I have believed in Allāh, His angels, His Books, and His messengers.'" [2][167]

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[166][1] Sharḥ Muslim (1/149).

[167][2] Masāʾil Ḥarb al-Karmānī (3/967).

Al-Khallāl titled the chapter in al-Sunnah: Refutation of the Murji'ah Regarding the Istithnāʾ in īmān [1][168]

Al-Karjī al-Qassāb said:

"A refutation of the Murji'ah regarding their claim that the Istithnāʾ in īmān is doubtful." [2][169]

Ibn Baṭṭah said:

"With this, the Sunnah of the Muslims proceeded, and upon it their customary practices were established, and their successors took it from their predecessors. No one contradicts the Istithnāʾ in īmān or refuses to accept it except a vile, misguided Murjiʾī upon whom Satan has prevailed over his heart. We seek refuge in Allāh from him." [3][170]

I say: As for the people of Sunnah, they say in shāʾ Allāh with regard to the outcome, and this is common between them and the Ashʿarīs. Likewise, they say it considering that faith is a level of increase above Islam. This, however, was not mentioned by al-Nawawī; he only

[168][1] al-Sunnah by al-Khallāl (3/593).

[169][2] al-Nukat al-Dāllah ʿalā al-Bayān (139/1).

[170][3] al-Ibānah al-Kubrā (2/873).

referred to the statement of the Ashʿarīs.

* * * *

Some other issues

His statement on the obligation of studying ʿIlm al-Kalām

Al-Nawawī said:

“Among the bidʿahs that are obligatory is learning the evidences of kalām in order to refute an innovator or atheist who raises objections — and this is a communal obligation (farḍ kifāyah).” [1][171]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Khuraybī said:

“I asked Sufyān al-Thawrī about kalām, and he said: ‘Leave falsehood! Where are you from the truth? Follow the Sunnah and abandon falsehood.’” [2][172]

Mālik said:

“May Allāh curse ʿAmr (ibn ʿUbayd), for he innovated these innovations of kalām. If kalām were knowledge, the Companions and Successors would have spoken about it

[171][1] Al-Majmūʿ (4/519, Ṭ. al-Minīriyyah).

[172][2] Dhamm al-Kalām wa-Ahlihi (5/109).

as they spoke regarding rulings and laws. But rather, it is falsehood leading to falsehood." [1][173]

Al-Shāfiʿī said:

"My ruling concerning the people of kalām is that they should be struck with palm branches and paraded among the tribes and clans — this is the recompense of one who abandons the Book and the Sunnah and turns to kalām." [2][174]

Imām Aḥmad said:

"The one who engages in kalām will never prosper." [3][175]

Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said:

"A man wrote to my father asking about debating with the people of kalām and sitting with them. My father dictated to me his reply: 'What we used to hear, and upon which we found those whom we met, is that they used to dislike kalām and sitting with the people of deviation.'" [4][176]

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[173][1] Dhamm al-Kalām wa-Ahlihi (5/72).

[174][2] Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa-Faḍlihi (2/941).

[175][3] Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā – Ibn Baṭṭah (2/540).

[176][4] Musnad Aḥmad (1/95, ed. Aḥmad Shākir).

Al-Bukhārī said:

“It is known from Aḥmad and the people of knowledge that the Speech of Allāh is uncreated and that everything else is created. They disliked delving into obscure matters and avoided the people of kalām.” [1][177]

Abū Ismāʿīl al-Harawī said:

“They made studying kalām obligatory and claimed that religion compelled them to it — by their assertion. Thus, they declared the Salaf to be disbelievers, labeled affirmation (of Allāh’s attributes) as anthropomorphism, criticized the Qur’ān, and deemed the Messenger ﷺ misguided.” [2][178]

Al-Ghazālī (the Ashʿarī) said:

“I say that learning disputation and kalām is blameworthy, like learning astrology — or, at best, it is permissible or recommended... As for the view of prohibition, it was held by al-Shāfiʿī, Mālik, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān, and all the people of ḥadīth among the Salaf.” [3][179]

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[177][1] Khalq Afʿāl al-ʿIbād by al-Bukhārī (p. 62).

[178][2] Al-Tisʿīniyyah (3/994).

[179][3] Qawāʿid al-ʿAqāʾid (p. 83).

The Āḥād reports in Iʿtiqād

Al-Nawawī said:

“The scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah differed regarding naming and describing Allāh, the Exalted, with attributes of perfection, majesty, and praise that are not reported in the Sharīʿah nor explicitly prohibited. Some permitted it, while others forbade it—unless there is definitive evidence from the Book of Allāh, a mutawātir Sunnah, or a consensus. If it is reported through a solitary (āḥād) narration, they differed: a group permitted it, saying that supplicating and praising Allāh with it is a form of action, and actions may be established by solitary reports. Others forbade it, since it pertains to belief regarding what is possible or impossible for Allāh, and that requires certainty. Al-Qāḍī said: The correct view is that it is permissible, as it pertains to action, based on His saying: ‘And to Allāh belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them.’” [1][180]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Shāfiʿī said: “Allāh mentioned those who are forbidden (in marriage), then said: ‘And lawful to you are [all others] beyond these’ — and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘A

[180][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/91).

woman and her paternal aunt must not be married together, nor a woman and her maternal aunt.' I know of no one who opposed following this. Thus, it contains two indications… and an indication that they accepted in this matter the report of a single narrator (khabar al-wāḥid), for we do not know anyone who transmitted it authentically from the Prophet ﷺ except Abū Hurayrah." [1][181]

Al-Ḥumaydī said: "We were with al-Shāfiʿī when a man came to him and asked about an issue. Al-Shāfiʿī said, 'The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ ruled such and such.' Then a man said to al-Shāfiʿī, 'What do you say?' He replied, 'Subḥān Allāh! Do you see me in a church? Do you see me in a synagogue? Do you see a belt around my waist? I tell you the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ ruled, and you say to me, "What do you say?"'" [2][182]

I said: Al-Shāfiʿī and the Salaf never made a distinction between matters of creed and actions.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr said: "There is nothing in matters of belief concerning the Names and Attributes of Allāh except what is explicitly stated in the Book of Allāh, authentically

[181][1] Al-Risālah by al-Shāfiʿī (p. 228).

[182][2] Dhamm al-Kalām wa-Ahlihi (3/13).

reported from the Messenger ﷺ, or unanimously agreed upon by the Ummah. As for what comes through solitary reports (āḥād) in all of that or similar matters — it is to be accepted submissively, and no argumentation is to be made regarding it." [1][183]

Ibn Baṭṭah said: "If it is said: the report of a single narrator is accepted only in matters of practical rulings, not in matters of creed and certainty — it is replied: even if these are solitary reports, the Ummah has received them with acceptance; among them are those who take them upon their apparent meanings — and they are the people of ḥadīth." [2][184]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Muslims have continually, since the time of the Companions, adhered to the reports of solitary narrations (āḥād) and acted upon them, affirming Allāh's Attributes through them. If these reports did not convey knowledge, then the Companions, the Tābiʿūn, their followers, and the Imams of Islām would all have been following what they had no knowledge of." [3][185] He also said: "As for the eighth point, which is the adherence of the certain, established consensus (ijmāʿ maʿlūm) to

[183][1] Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa-Faḍlihi (2/943).

[184][2] Ibṭāl al-Taʾwīlāt (p. 84, Ṭ. Ghurās).

[185][3] Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Mursalah ʿalā al-Jahmiyyah wa-l-Muʿaṭṭilah (p. 578).

accepting these solitary reports and affirming the Attributes of the Lord through them — no one with the slightest familiarity with transmitted knowledge doubts it. The Companions transmitted these reports and received them from one another with acceptance; none of them rejected them from those who transmitted them. Then all the Tābiʿīn received them from the Companions likewise, and those who heard them from the Tābiʿīn accepted them with assent and affirmation; and those who did not hear them directly from them received them from the Tābiʿīn in the same manner, and similarly the Tābiʿ al-Tābiʿīn with their contemporaries. This matter is necessarily known to the people of ḥadīth." [1][186]

ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-ʿAbbād said: "This is the method of the innovators, who do not accept solitary reports in matters of creed." [3][187]

Al-Tabarruk (Seeking blessings)

Al-Nawawī said: "In this ḥadīth there are types of knowledge, many of which have been presented. It includes seeking blessings through the traces of the

[186][1] Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Mursalah ʿalā al-Jahmiyyah wa-l-Muʿaṭṭilah (p. 605).

[187][2] Al-Intiṣār li-Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Ḥadīth fī Radd Abāṭīl Ḥasan al-Mālikī (p. 192).

righteous, visiting scholars, virtuous people, and their elders, and seeking blessings from them." [1][188]

He said: "It includes seeking blessings from the traces of the righteous and the virtue of their food and drink," and similar matters. [2][189]

He said: "It includes seeking blessings from people of righteousness and virtue, and it is recommended to carry children to people of virtue to seek blessings from them." [3][190]

He said: "It includes seeking blessings from the traces of the righteous and making use of their purity, food, drink, and clothing." [4][191]

He said: "It includes seeking blessings from the traces of the righteous and their clothing." [5][192]

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[188][1] Sharḥ Muslim (1/244).

[189][2] Sharḥ Muslim (11/55).

[190][3] Sharḥ Muslim (3/194).

[191][4] Sharḥ Muslim (4/219).

[192][5] Sharḥ Muslim (3/7).

He said: “And in this ḥadīth there is evidence for the recommendation of seeking blessings from the traces of the righteous and their garments.” [1][193]

He said: “Seeking blessings from the traces of the righteous, their garments, and everything belonging to them.” [2][194]

He said: “And there is no harm in kissing the face of a righteous deceased to seek blessings.” [3][195]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Khallāl said: “ʿAlī Ibn ʿAbd al-Samad al-Ṭayālisī informed us: I wiped my hands on Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, then wiped my hands on my body while he was watching, and he became extremely angry; he shook off his hand and said: ‘From whom did you take this?’ and he strongly disapproved it.” [4][196]

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[193][1] Sharḥ Muslim (4/44).

[194][2] Sharḥ Muslim (14/124).

[195][3[Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (10/236) – Al-Adhkār,

[196][4] Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad (p. 368).

Sulaymān ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb said: “Some of the later scholars mentioned that seeking blessings from the traces of the righteous is recommended, such as drinking their saliva, rubbing oneself with them or their garments, bringing a newborn to one of them to have him taste a date so that the first thing entering his body is the saliva of the righteous, seeking blessings from their sweat, and similar actions. Abū Zakariyyāʾ al-Nawawī mentioned many such things in Sharḥ Muslim in the ḥadīths where the Ṣaḥābah did something like this with the Prophet ﷺ and assumed that other righteous people could be treated similarly to the Prophet ﷺ. This is a clear error.” [1][197]

Ibn Bāz said: “It is not permissible to seek blessings from anyone other than the Prophet ﷺ—neither from their ablution, hair, sweat, nor any part of their body. All of this is specific to the Prophet ﷺ because Allah placed blessings in his body. Therefore, the Ṣaḥābah—may Allah be pleased with them—did not seek blessings from anyone among them, neither in life nor after death, whether from the Rightly Guided Caliphs or others. This indicates that they knew it was specific to the Prophet ﷺ alone and that doing otherwise is a means to shirk and worshiping other than Allah.” [2][198]

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[197][1] Taysīr al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd alladhī huwa Ḥaqq Allāh ʿalā al-ʿIbād (p. 150).

[198][2] Majmūʿ Fatāwā wa Maqālāt Mutanawwiʿah Ibn Bāz (7/65).

Ibn Jibrīn said: “Among the types of seeking blessings that are forbidden with the righteous is rubbing oneself with them, wearing their garments, or drinking after them in order to seek barakah.” [1][199]

Al-Tawassul (intercession)

In his book al-Adhkār, al-Nawawī mentioned a duʿāʾ: “Allāhumma innī astashfaʿu ilayka bi-khawāṣṣ ʿibādika…” [2][200]

He said: “Then he returns to his original position facing the face of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and seeks means through him for his own right and intercedes through him to his Lord, Glorified and Exalted.” [3][201]

Scholars' Statements on this

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “For someone to say: I ask You by the right of so-and-so… all of this is among the newly

[199][1] Mukhtaṣar Sharḥ Tashīl al-ʿAqīdah al-Islāmiyyah (p. 152, 6th edition).

[200][2] al-Adhkār al-Arnaʾūṭ (p. 201).

[201][3] al-Majmūʿ (8/274, Ṭ al-Manīriyyah – al-Iḍāḥ fī Manāsik al-Ḥajj wa al-ʿUmrah, p. 454).

invented bidʿah.” [1][202]

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb said: “As for al-tawassul, which is when a person says: ‘Allāhumma innī atawassalu ilayka bi-jāh nabiyyika Muḥammad ﷺ’ or ‘bi-ḥaqq nabiyyika,’ or ‘bi-jāh ʿibādika al-ṣāliḥīn,’ or ‘bi-ḥaqq ʿabdika fulān,’ this is among the categories of blameworthy bidʿah.” [2][203]

Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions said: “It is not permissible and they forbade it, as they said: one should not ask through a created being nor say: ‘I ask You by the right of Your prophets.’” [3][204]

Ibn Bāz said: “The third category is a bidʿah; it is not shirk, nor is it prescribed, but it is an innovation. It is seeking means through the right of so-and-so, or through the status of so-and-so, or the right of the prophets; this is blameworthy and an innovation, and one of the means of shirk.” [4][205]

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[202][1] Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (24/329).

[203][2] al-Durar al-Saniyyah fī al-Ajwībat al-Najdiyyah (1/232).

[204][3] Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (1/202).

[205][4] Fatāwā Nūr ʿalā al-Darb by Ibn Bāz, edited by al-Shuwayʿir (2/117).

Traveling specifically to visit the Prophet's ﷺ grave — and seeking blessings from the belongings of the Companions.

An-Nawawī transmitted from ʿIyāḍ, affirming his statement: "So every person of firm faith, with a contented heart, would travel to it, and thereafter at all times until our era, to visit the Prophet's grave and to seek blessings from his sights, traces, and the noble Companions' traces; none comes to it except a believer." [1][206]

Scholars' Statements on this

As for seeking blessings from the traces of the Companions: people used to go to the tree called the Tree of al-Riḍwān and pray by it. It reached ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, so he warned them and commanded it to be cut down. [2][207]

I say: Here Amīr al-Muʾminīn cuts down the tree; if seeking blessings from the tangible traces of the Companions were part of the religion, then ʿUmar's act

[206][1] Sharḥ Muslim (2/177).

[207][2] al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr (2/96, Khānjī edition).

would have been wrong, and an-Nawawī's statement is correct.

Abū al-ʿĀliyah said: "When we opened Tustar, we found in the house of the treasury of al-Harmzān a bed with a dead man on it… During the day we dug thirteen scattered graves, and at night we buried him and leveled all the graves to conceal him from people so that they would not exhume him. Khalid ibn Dīnār said: 'And what did they expect from him?' He said: 'When the sky withheld rain from them, they saw him on his bed, and it rained.' Khalid asked: 'Who did you think the man was?' He said: 'A man called Dānīyāl.'" [1][208]

I said: "And this is the body of the Prophet, and they concealed it so that people would not seek blessings from it."

Al-Shāṭibī said: "They left this matter under the category of legal precautions, out of fear that it would be made a Sunnah, as was mentioned earlier regarding following traces and the prohibition of that, or because the general public does not restrain themselves in this, but rather exceeds limits in it and exaggerates through their ignorance in seeking blessings; so that they may

[208][1] Sīrah Ibn Isḥāq - al-Siyar wa al-Maghāzī (p. 66).

associate with the object of blessing a reverence that goes beyond its limit, and perhaps attribute to it what is not in it. And this form of seeking blessings is the essence of worship; for this reason ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, cut down the tree under which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to be, for it is indeed the origin of idol worship among past nations." [1][209]

His affirmation of bidʿah ḥasanah and bidʿah wājibah

Al-Nawawī said: "In the Shariʿah, bidʿah with a kasra on the bāʾ is to introduce something that did not exist in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and it is divided into: good and evil." [2][210]

He said: "Every innovation is misguidance—this is from the general to the specific—because innovation is everything done without a precedent. The scholars said it is of five kinds: obligatory, recommended, forbidden, disliked, and permissible. I have mentioned clear examples of them in Tahdhīb al-Asmāʾ wa al-Lughāt." [3][211]

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[209][1] al-Iʿtisām – al-Shāṭibī, al-Shuqayr, al-Ḥamīd, al-Ṣīnī (2/304).

[210][2] Tahdhīb al-Asmāʾ wa al-Lughāt (3/22).

[211][3] al-Majmūʿ (4/519, Ṭ al-Munīriyya).

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Qāsim ibn Sallām said: “On this saying were Sufyān, al-Awzāʿī, Mālik ibn Anas, and those after them among the masters of knowledge and people of the Sunnah, who were the lamps of the earth and imams of knowledge in their era, from the people of Iraq, Ḥijāz, Sham, and elsewhere, acting with respect toward all people of innovation.” [1][212]

Al-Sijzī said: “There is also no disagreement that the Ummah is forbidden from introducing innovations in the religion.” [2][213]

Ibn Qudāmah said: “What comes after Paradise is nothing but Hell, and what comes after the Truth is nothing but misguidance, and what comes after the Sunnah is nothing but innovation. You know that every newly introduced thing is an innovation, so do not speak regarding innovations.” [3][214]

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[212][1] al-Īmān – Abū ʿUbayd (p. 66).

[213][2] Risālat al-Sijzī ilā Ahl Zubayd fī al-Radd ʿalā man Ankara al-Ḥarf wa al-Ṣawt (p. 147).

[214][3] Taḥrīm al-Naẓar fī Kutub al-Kalām (p. 71).

Al-Dhahabī said: “Some people divided it into forbidden, disliked, permissible, recommended, and obligatory... but they scarcely distinguish between the good innovation and the evil innovation; one approves what the other condemns. [1][215] and he said: “And our religion, praise be to Allāh, is complete, perfect, and pleasing... so what need do we have after this for innovations in actions and words? Ibn Masʿūd said: ‘Follow and do not innovate, for you have been sufficed.’” [2][216]

Al-Shawkānī said: “«Whoever performs an action that is not commanded by us, it is rejected.», And this hadith is among the principles of religion, for under it fall rulings that cannot all be enumerated. And how explicit and clear it is in nullifying what the jurists have done in dividing innovations into categories.” [3][217]

Muḥammad Bashīr al-Sahsawānī said: “They innovated for themselves a principle for approving innovations and condemning those who reject them, which is the division of innovation into good and bad.” [4][218]

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[215][1] Al-Tamassuk bi al-Sunan wa al-Taḥdhīr min al-Bidaʿ (p. 98).

[216][2] Al-Tamassuk bi al-Sunan wa al-Taḥdhīr min al-Bidʿ (p. 109).

[217][3] Nayl al-Awtār (2/93).

[218][4] Ṣiyanat al-Insān ʿan Waswasa al-Shaykh Dahlān (p. 6).

Ibn ʿUthaymīn said: “Dividing innovation into five categories or more or less, some people misunderstood this, as they introduced into the religion of Allāh what is not from it, under the pretext that it is a good innovation, and they distorted the words of the Messenger ﷺ by saying that the meaning of his statement ‘Every innovation is misguidance’ refers only to bad innovation, and this undoubtedly contradicts the Messenger ﷺ and implies a deficiency in his explanation.” [1][219]

Slaughtering in the name of the Prophet ﷺ

Al-Nawawī said: “If the slaughterer says: ‘In the name of Allāh and in the name of Muḥammad,’ intending to slaughter in the name of Allāh and to seek blessing in the name of Muḥammad, it should not be prohibited.” [2][220]

Scholars' Statements on this

Al-Shāfiʿī said: “And if they have another slaughter upon which they invoke a name other than Allāh, such as the name of al-Masīḥ, or they slaughter it in a name other

[219][1] Fatāwā Nūr ʿalā al-Ḍarb li al-ʿUthaymīn (2/4).

[220][2] Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (3/206).

than Allāh, this is not permissible from their slaughter." [1][221]

Al-Baghawī said: "His Exalted statement 'Forbidden to you are carrion, blood, pork, and that over which any name other than Allāh has been invoked' means: whatever is slaughtered invoking a name other than Allāh." [2][222]

Ibn Taymiyya said: "Allāh has forbidden what is slaughtered on an altar, which is that slaughtered for other than Allāh and upon which a name other than Allāh is invoked." [3][223]

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "And if a Muslim slaughters for other than Allāh, or slaughters invoking a name other than Allāh, it is not permissible, even if he does not disbelieve by doing so." [4][224]

Jamal al-Dīn al-Ṣiddīqī said: "And whoever slaughters for

[221][1] Al-Um li al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī (2/254, Ṭābiʿ al-Fikr).

[222][2] Tafsīr al-Baghawī – Ṭayyiba (3/10).

[223][3] Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (17/485).

[224][4] Iqtiḍāʾ al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm li Mukhalafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm (2/60).

other than Allāh, that is, in a name other than Allāh, like one who slaughters for an idol, or for ʿĪsā, or for the Kaʿbah, if he intends to venerate it, he is a disbeliever." [1][225]

Ibn al-ʿUthaymīn said: "What is invoked for other than Allāh, that is, whatever is named with a name other than Allāh, such as in the name of al-Masīḥ, Mūsā, Muḥammad, Jibrīl, and the like, this is also forbidden, and its consumption is not permissible." [2][226]

His failure to prohibit ṭilasmāt (amulets)

Al-Nawawī said: "Question: These talāsim that are written for benefits and whose meaning is unknown, is it permissible to write them or not? The answer: It is disliked, and not prohibited." [3][227]

His interpretation of kufr as being due to sins

[225][1] Majmaʿ Biḥār al-Anwār (2/226).

[226][2] Fatāwā Nūr ʿalā al-Ḍarb, Ibn ʿUthaymīn (2/5).

[227][3] Fatāwā al-Nawawī (2/278).

Al-Nawawī said: “His statement: ‘unless you see clear disbelief with proof from Allāh for it’—the intended meaning of disbelief here is sins, and the meaning of ‘with proof from Allāh for it’ is that you know it from the religion of Allāh Almighty.” [1][228]

Scholars' Statements on this

I say: This is an incorrect interpretation, and al-Māzarī followed it (as is his habit), but the people of knowledge transmitted it and left it at its apparent meaning without interpreting it.

And a number of the commentators said:

Al-Khaṭṭābī said: And his statement: “unless you see clear disbelief,” the meaning of clear is explicit. [2][229]

Ibn Baṭṭāl said: “Unless the imām commits disbelief and clearly opposes the call of Islām,” [3][230]
And his words were transmitted by Ibn al-Mulqan in his

[228][1] Sharḥ Muslim (12/228).

[229][2] ʿAlām al-Ḥadīth (Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī) (4/2328).

[230][3] Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī – Ibn Baṭṭāl (9/10).

commentary. [1][231]

Al-Baydāwī said: “It is ‘with you from Allāh’ that which clearly indicates it is disbelief.” [2][232]

Ibn ʿUthaymīn said: “It is not permissible to dispute the rulers and fight them except if they commit clear disbelief.” [3][233]

Belief in the superstitions of the Ṣufīs claiming they met Khiḍr ﷺ

Al-Nawawī said: “The majority” of the scholars hold that he is alive and present among us, and this is agreed upon by the Ṣufīs, the people of righteousness and knowledge, and their stories – regarding seeing him, meeting him, taking from him, questioning him and his answers, and his presence in noble places and locations of goodness – are too numerous to enumerate and more famous than can be concealed. [4][234]

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[231][1] Al-Tawḍīḥ li Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ (3/2832).

[232][2] Tuḥfat al-Abrār Sharḥ Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah (2/544).

[233][3] Ḥukm Tārik al-Ṣalah – Ibn ʿUthaymīn (p. 10).

[234][4] Sharḥ Muslim (15/135)

Scholars' Statements on this

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “And as many of them claim the life of Khiḍr… and among them is someone whom the jinn appear to in a form and says: ‘I am Khiḍr,’ while he is lying.” [1][235]

Ibn Kathīr said: “And these narrations and stories are the main sources of those who went to his life until today. And all of the ḥadīths that are raised (marfūʿ) are very weak; none serves as proof in religion. And most of the stories are not free from weakness in the isnād… And the sheikh Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, may Allah have mercy on him, undertook in his book: ʿUjālat al-Muntaẓar, in explaining the state of Khiḍr regarding the marfūʿ ḥadīths related to him, and clarified that they are fabricated, and from the reports from the companions, the tābiʿīn, and those after them, he clarified the weakness of their isnāds by explaining their conditions and the ignorance of their narrators, and he excelled in that and perfected the criticism.”

As for those who held that he has died, among them are al-Bukhārī, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī, Abū al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Munādī, and Ibn al-Jawzī (al-Jahmī) , who defended that position

[235][1] Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (262/8)

and authored a book on it. [1][236]

I say: And al-Nawawī's statement that the Ṣūfiyyah meet him—they did not clarify for us the secret of his concealment from others, except that it is a falsehood they circulated to validate their religion before the common people. And al-Nawawī, who believed them, counts him among the Ṣūfiyyah and their righteous ones, yet he did not meet him himself.

And why did he not meet Imām Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī, and Muslim, so that we could see their asānīd: "al-Khiḍr told me from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ," instead of these long asānīd? Or did he not benefit from the knowledge of those whom Allāh commanded all the prophets to follow and support? [2][237] So why did he neither pledge allegiance nor aid them?

And why does he meet the Ṣūfiyyah, the people of innovations, yet did not meet the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ?

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[236][1] Al-Bidāyah wa'l-Nihāyah (2/263) T. al-Turkī

[237][2] Regarding his (Allāh's) statement: "And [remember] when Allāh took the covenant of the prophets, 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom, then a Messenger comes to you confirming what is with you, you shall believe in him and support him.' He said, 'Did you affirm and take upon that My covenant?' They said, 'We have affirmed.' He said, 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.'"

Nor the rightly-guided Caliphs, nor the imāms of knowledge among the Companions and the Tābiʿīn?

And how did he learn Islām, and from whom did he learn it, having abandoned learning from the Prophet ﷺ, his Companions, and the imāms of the Muslims from the Salaf? Did he learn it from commentators of books and those following madhāhib? Or did Allāh teach him through revelation, as Allāh revealed to Muhammad ﷺ, and similarly to al-Khiḍr?

Then what is his excuse for not conveying and ruling on the disputes that shake the Ummah, while he secretly sits with some Ṣūfiyyah and answers them?

And where is he, and what does he do, and from what does he earn his livelihood? And does he have a passport? Otherwise, how does he travel between countries to meet the Ṣūfiyyah today? And did he give them his real name for passport purposes, or did he lie—ḥāshāh ʿalayhim? And if he told the truth, would they believe him, yet not at least imagine taking a selfie with him? Or is he among the people of al-Khuṭwah [1]?[238] So where does he live, and what documents did he present to buy or rent a

[238][1] The Ahl al-Khuṭwah are Ṣūfiyyah who move from one country to another in a single step.

house? Or does he live in a tent?

Some of what they narrate and the Ṣūfiyyah believed 300 years ago is no longer acceptable today.

* * * *

Discussion of matters in which he is said to have opposed the Ashāʿirah

I came across a number of statements regarding the issue, and I found that most of them are not based on anything that can be discussed, except for their saying: “He is not Ashʿarī, but he agreed with the Ashʿariyyah in some issues.” This is neither definitive nor does it clarify which issues an-Nawawī differed from the Ashʿariyyah on, so that we may discuss his words.

As for what is definitive, then with full attention we examine and study his words.

Yāsir Burhāmī said:

It is not correct to say: an-Nawawī, is Ashʿarī in all branches of ʿAqīdah, for in matters of īmān he says: “Indeed, īmān is qawl and ʿamal, explicitly stated,” and in matters of qadar he follows the statement of Ahl as-Sunnah in affirming the khalq of the afʿāl of the ʿibād and their occurrence bi-mashīʾatihim, and in matters of the ṣifāt he mentions both positions: the view of the Salaf and the view of the Khalaf, and he does not clarify the meaning of tafwīḍ to attribute to the Mufawwiḍah the statement: “For in matters of īmān he says: ‘Indeed, īmān is qawl and ʿamal…’”

I say: So does the mutakallim not know that the statement "al-īmān is qawl wa ʿamal" is a madhhab among a group of the Ashʿariyyah? Except that they do not regard ʿamal as a pillar, and this is what an-Nawawī says and what we have transmitted from him. Then the strange thing is that an-Nawawī transmitted this statement—that al-īmān is qawl wa ʿamal—from Ibn Baṭṭāl al-Ashʿarī. Did the mutakallim not notice this?!

An-Nawawī said: The muḥaqqiqūn from among our companions, the mutakallimūn, say: "The same taṣdīq (belief) neither increases nor decreases, whereas al-īmān ash-sharʿī increases and decreases with the increase of its thamarāt (fruits), which are the actions, and their decrease… And this is what these people said, and although it appears good externally, it is more apparent—and Allāh knows best—that the taṣdīq itself increases with abundant contemplation and the manifestation of the dalāʾil. "[1][239]

I say: Did the mutakallim not notice that an-Nawawī transmits his statement about al-īmān from the mutakallimūn themselves?!

And his statement: "He says according to Ahl as-Sunnah

[239][1] Sharḥ Muslim (1/148).

regarding the affirmation of the khalq of the afʿāl of the ʿibād."

I say: I did not come across an-Nawawī's statement on the matter, but does the mutakallim here think that the Ashʿariyyah regard the afʿāl of the ʿibād as not created? If he thinks this, then he is mistaken, for the Ashʿariyyah affirm that they are created. Al-Bājūrī al-Ashʿarī said: "The summary is that after the people agreed that Allāh is the Creator of the ʿibād and their ʿiḍṭirārī (compulsory) actions, they differed regarding their ikhtiyārī (voluntary) actions. We say that Allāh is also their Creator [1][240], and this is in the most famous book for beginners in Ashʿarī ʿaqīdah, namely: Tuḥfat al-Murīd."

The conclusion is that what Dr. Yāsir mentioned is not correct on this issue.

Falāḥ Mundakār said:

He said: "All of the Ashʿarīyyah revolve around three issues; one is not called Ashʿarī except if these three are present:

[240][1] Tuḥfat al-Murīd, Ṭ Dar al-Salām (p. 168)

1. Giving absolute precedence to reason over revelation.

2. Dividing revelation into two types: the first is mutawātir, which can be used as evidence, and the second is āḥād, which cannot be used as evidence in matters of ʿaqīdah.

3. The obligation to interpret all revelation so that it accords with reason.

Whenever these three are found in a book or a person, he is undoubtedly Ashʿarī. An Ashʿarī is not Ashʿarī except with these three, and they are present in all Ashʿarī books.

As for al-Nawawī and Ibn Ḥajar, I challenge anyone to show me a single place in their books where either of them gives precedence to reason over revelation. By God, this principle is entirely abolished, and you can even see their disdain for those who make anything other than the Qurʾān, Sunnah, and Salaf the basis.

Second: By God, they do not differentiate between mutawātir and āḥād; rather, they state that the proof is established even with this āḥād ḥadīth.

Third: This exists with them, but not absolutely; sometimes they interpret, and other times they follow the way of the Salaf. They consider this the truth as they

received it from their teachers, for al-Nawawī's teachers were all Ashʿarī. In this matter, there is fluctuation and inconsistency.

Al-Nawawī has a work called Juzʾ fī al-Ḥarf wa al-Ṣawt, "He affirmed the letter and the sound of God," while all Ashʿarīyyah interpret the letters and speech of God as metaphorical. Al-Nawawī refuted them."

Answer:

His statement: "First: Giving absolute precedence to reason over revelation."

I say: The Ashʿarīyyah do not give reason precedence over revelation absolutely; rather, they do so only when the apparent meaning of revelation, in their view, conflicts with the certainties established by reason.

Al-Juwaynī said: "There is no reliance upon apparent texts that are open to interpretation when they oppose rational certainties." [1][241] This applies in matters of

[241][1] Ghiyāth al-Umam fī Iltiyāth al-Ẓulam (p. 44).

ʿAqīdah, especially those related to the Ṣifāt of Allāh. And he said concerning what is other than that: “Reason does not indicate the goodness or badness of anything in the rulings of obligation; rather, good and bad are taken from the sources of the Sharʿ and from the dictates of revelation.” [1][242]

His statement: “Second: Dividing revelation into two types — the first: mutawātir, which is used as proof; the second: āḥād, which cannot be used as proof in matters of creed.”

I say: The matter is not that they do not permit using āḥād reports as evidence; rather, they do use them in matters of Iʿtiqād — they affirm through them the unseen matters and beliefs regarding the affairs of the Ākhirah and other such things.

His statement: “Third: The obligation of interpreting all revelation so that it agrees with reason.”

I say: Not all revelation, but only what, in their view, conflicts with what they regard as rational certainties — as we mentioned in the first issue.

[242][1] Al-Irshād (2/76).

I say: So, the summary of the three is that they give precedence to what they take from rational principles over the texts regarding the Ṣifāt of Allāh, and they differentiate between mutawātir and āḥād reports.

His statement: “I challenge you to bring even a single place in their books where either of them gave reason precedence over revelation.”

The answer: All of the previous statements cited regarding Iʿtiqād are based on giving precedence to reason over revelation — there is no doubt about that. Otherwise, on what basis did he interpret them (the texts)? Did he have one athar that he preferred over another and therefore interpreted it? No; rather, he gave precedence to the Ashʿarī rational certainties over the texts and diverted them from their true meaning.

Otherwise, does the speaker think that al-Nawawī’s statement, “For stillness is impossible for Allah, the Exalted” [1][243] is taken from revelation? Or from the philosophy of the Greeks, from which they deduced that God is neither still nor in motion? Or that his saying, “Rather, the believers will see Him not in a direction, just

[243][1] Rawḍat al-Ṭālibīn (10/85).

as they know Him not in a direction" [1][244] is based on revelation? No — rather, it is based on the rational principles of the Ashʿarīs.

As for his statement: "By Allah, they do not differentiate between mutawātir and āḥād,"

Perhaps he did not read the passage we quoted in which al-Nawawī clearly differentiated between mutawātir and āḥād.

As for his statement: "At times he does taʾwīl and at times he follows the way of the Salaf,"

I say: I have not found that "time" when he followed the way of the Salaf in affirming the Ṣifāt.

As for his statement: "And al-Nawawī has a work titled: Juzʾ fī al-Ḥarf wa al-Ṣawt,"."

I say: He mentioned it as if it were a regular composition,

[244][1[Sharḥ Muslim (15/3).

giving the impression that what it contains represents al-Nawawī's ʿAqīdah and methodology in general — but this is incorrect. It has been said that he repented two months before his death and wrote this book then. Therefore, it is not valid to mix his creed before repentance with his creed after it.

However, this book requires a separate discussion, which I will place at the end of this work.

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Section on al-Nawawī's affiliation with the mutakallimīn

Al-Nawawī said: "And the soul (al-rūḥ)… the view of our companions among the mutakallimīn is that it is a subtle body." [1][245]

And he said: "The verifying scholars among our companions, the mutakallimīn, said that the very Taṣdīq (itself) neither increases nor decreases." [2][246]

And he said: "A group said: he should not say 'I am a believer' without qualification, but should say 'I am a believer, if Allāh wills.' Some of our companions related this view from most of our companions among the mutakallimīn. [3][247]" [4][248]

[245][1] Al-Majmūʿ (2/14, Ṭ. al-Manīriyya).

[246][2] Sharḥ Muslim (1/148).

[247][3] Note: He differed from them in this issue and agreed with the Māturīdiyyah, saying: "Others held that unrestrictedly saying it is permissible, and that he should not say 'if Allah wills'—and this is the preferred and the view of the verifying scholars."— Sharḥ Muslim (1/150).

[248][4] Sharḥ Muslim (1/150).

He said: “In it is evidence for the view of our companions among the mutakallimīn and those who agreed with them, that the soul (al-rūḥ) is a subtle body permeating the body.” (1)[249]

He said: “In it is that the karāmāt of the awliyāʾ may occur by their choice and request, and this is the correct view according to our companions among the mutakallimīn.” [2][250]

He said: “According [3][251] to some of our companions among the mutakallimīn, His—exalted is He—attributes are neither said to be the Essence nor other than It.” — Tahdhīb al-Asmāʾ wa-al-Lughāt (3/143).

He said: “Imām al-Ḥaramayn (al-Juwaynī) and others among our companions, mutakallimīn, said: guidance (tawfīq) is the creation of the ability for obedience, and abandonment (khidhlān) is the creation of the ability for sin.” [4][252]

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[249][1] Sharḥ Muslim (6/223).

[250][2] Sharḥ Muslim (16/108).

[251][3] Thus in the printed edition; perhaps he meant “according to the view of.”

[252][4] Tahdhīb al-Asmāʾ wa-al-Lughāt (4/193).

He said: “Provision (al-rizq) according to our companions among the mutakallimīn and according to the linguists is everything from which the beneficiary benefits.” [1][253]

I say: By Allāh, is not the man more knowledgeable of his own madhhab and affiliation than those who deny it of him?

Then if it is said: “We acknowledge that we do not know him better than himself, and that he, as he said, is among the theologians.” But (you say) he is not among the Ashʿarīs—then answer us: from which of the theologians is he? From the Jahmiyyah, the Muʿtazilah, or the Rāfiḍah? Rather, he is from the Ashʿarīs whom the renewers of the religion (mujaddidū al-dīn) have named.

His claim that the Ashʿarīs are the renewers of the religion (mujaddidū al-dīn)

He said: “It is narrated in the ḥadīth that Allāh, exalted is He, sends at the head of every hundred years someone who corrects the religion of this Ummah… The scholars

[253][1] Taḥrīr Alfāẓ al-Tanbīh (p. 127).

attributed the first in the hundred to ʿUmar, the second to al-Shāfiʿī, the third to Abū al-ʿAbbās Ibn Surayj. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Qāsim Ibn ʿAsākir said: ‘According to me, it refers to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, though the famous view is Ibn Surayj…’ In the fourth, it is said Abū Sahl al-Ṣaʿlūkī, or the judge Ibn al-Bāqillānī, or Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfarāʾīnī, and in the fifth: the Imām Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, may Allah have mercy on him, and Allah knows best.” [1][254]

I say: So does the Ashʿarī view anyone other than the Ashʿarīs as a mujaddid?

Scholars' Statements on this

Ibn al-Jawzī said: “Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, the theologian, was born in the year 260 AH, and busied himself with theology, and for a long time followed the Muʿtazilah. Then he differed from them, and expressed a doctrine that confused people’s beliefs and caused continuous turmoil.” [2][255]

Ibn Qudāmah said: “And it is astonishing that their Imām [i.e., al-Ashʿarī], who originated this innovation, was a man not known for piety, nor for religiosity, nor for any of the

[254][1] Tahdhīb al-Asmāʾ wa-al-Lughāt (2/18).

[255][2] Al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa-al-Umam (14/29).

sciences of the Sharīʿah at all, and no knowledge is attributed to him except the reprehensible ʿilm al-kalām. And they acknowledge that he followed the Muʿtazilah for forty years, then later revealed his return from it. Yet after his repentance, nothing appeared from him except this innovation. So how could it occur in their minds that Allah would not grant true knowledge except to His enemy, nor place guidance except with one who has no share in the knowledge of Islām nor in religion?" [1][256]

His claim that al-Ashʿarī's madhhab represents the madhhab of Ahl al-Sunnah

He said in the biography of al-Isfarāʾīnī: "And the ustādh was one of the three who gathered in one era in supporting the madhhab of ḥadīth and Sunnah in the kalām issues, standing in support of the madhhab of Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī. They were: the ustādh Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāʾīnī, al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqilānī, and al-Imām Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak." [2][257]

[256][1] Al-Munāẓarah fī al-Qurʾān (p. 52) — with my Taḥqīq

[257][2] Tahdhīb al-Asmāʾ wa al-Lughāt (2) 170.

Scholars' statements on this

Abū Naṣr al-Sijzī said: “And whoever mastered the Sunnah, then reflected on his two books, it becomes clear that there is a disagreement between him and Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak and his companions regarding the truth, and the Muʿtazilah, despite their flawed madhhab, are less harmful to the common people of Ahl al-Sunnah than these.” [1][258]

And he said: “Then the people of the Sunnah were followed after these by a group who claim to be from the people of following, and their harm is greater than the harm of the Muʿtazilah and others. They are… Abū Bakr ibn al-Bāqilānī in Baghdād, Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāʾīnī, and Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak in Khurāsān. These people opposed some statements of the Muʿtazilah, and they opposed the people of athar more than they opposed the Muʿtazilah.” [2][259]

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[258][1] Risālah al-Sijzī ilā Ahl Zubayd (p. 270).

[259][2[Risālah al-Sijzī ilā Ahl Zubayd (p. 343).

Juzʾ fī al-Ḥarf wa al-Ṣawt

It was said that al-Nawawī repented and authored a Juzʾ on al-Ḥarf waṣ-Ṣawt (the letter and the sound), in which he retracted the Ashʿarī ʿAqīdah.

The Muḥaqqiq said: “He authored this section approximately two months before his death — may Allāh have mercy on him — as he completed it on the third Thursday of the month of Rabīʿ al-Ākhir in the year 676 AH, and he passed away — may Allāh have mercy on him — on the twenty-fourth of Rajab of the same year.” [1][260]

And what indicates that it is indeed his (authorship) is his statement: “And I have divided it — by the grace of Allāh — into chapters containing various principles and precious matters of Iʿtiqād, which I gathered from the books of knowledge and included in our well-known book al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalat al-Qurʾān, among others.” (p. 16)

And without doubt, al-Tibyān is his book.

In this section, there is a clear disavowal of Ashʿarism, as he said: “And it is astonishing that the books of the

[260][1] (p. 5)

Ashʿarīs are filled with the claim that the speech of Allāh is revealed to His Prophet, written in the muṣḥafs, and recited by tongues in reality — yet they say that what is revealed is only a Ḥikāyah (expression) , that what is written is not (truly) writing, and that what is recited is not (truly) recitation. Then they embark upon clear contradictions and feeble, shallow objections. And it suffices to refute this belief that they cannot even openly declare it, but rather conceal it in ambiguity." [1][261]

He also said:

"Indeed, by this clarification, much of the Ashʿarīs' speech and deceptions collapse before one who knows the meanings and subtleties of speech." [2][262]

He said in it:

""And it is from our religion to adhere to the Book of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and to the Sunnah of our Prophet ﷺ, and to what has been transmitted from the Companions, the Tābiʿūn, and the well-known Imāms of Ḥadīth. We believe in all the ḥadīths concerning the divine attributes — we neither add to them nor subtract from them — such as the ḥadīth of the story of the Dajjāl and his statement in it: 'Indeed, your Lord is not one-eyed,'

[261][1] (p. 39)

[262][2] (p. 53)

and the ḥadīth of the descent to the lowest heaven, and the ḥadīth of the istiwāʾ (rising) over the Throne, and that the hearts are between two fingers of His fingers, and that He will place the heavens upon a finger and the earths upon a finger. We affirm the truth of the ḥadīth of the Miʿrāj and what has been authentically reported within it, and we hold that Allāh is the Turner of the hearts.

And we affirm all such aḥādīth as they have been transmitted, without delving into their interpretation (taʾwīl), but rather we let them pass as they have come.

And that faith īmān is statement and action — it increases with obedience and decreases with sin.

And we say: Indeed, Allāh will come on the Day of Resurrection as He said: ﴿ Wa jāʾa rabbuka wal-malaku ṣaffan ṣaffā ﴾ (And your Lord will come, and the angels, rank upon rank), and that Allah draws near to His servants as He wills, as He said: ﴿ Wa naḥnu aqrabu ilayhi min ḥabli-l-warīd ﴾ (And We are closer to him than his jugular vein), and His saying: ﴿ Thumma danā fa-tadallā fa-kāna qāba qawsayni aw adnā ﴾ (Then He drew near and came closer, and was at a distance of two bow-lengths or nearer), and similar verses concerning the divine attributes. We do not interpret them nor probe into them, but rather we withhold as al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ withheld.

And we believe that Allah is above His Throne as He informed in His Noble Book, and we do not say that He is in every place. Rather, He is in the heaven, and His knowledge is in every place — no place is devoid of it — as He said: ﴿ A-amintum man fī-s-samāʾ ﴾ (Do you feel secure from Him Who is above the heavens?), and as He said: ﴿ Ilayhi yaṣʿadu-l-kalimu-ṭ-Ṭayyib ﴾ (To Him ascends good speech).

And as it came in the ḥadīth of the Isrāʾ to the seventh heaven: “Then he drew near to his Lord”, and as in the ḥadīth of the black slave girl whom it was intended to free, so the Prophet ﷺ said to her: “Where is your Lord?” She said: “In the heaven.” He said: “Free her, for she is a believer.”

And there are many such examples in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah; we believe in all of them and do not reject any of them.

And the reliable narrators have reported from Mālik ibn Anas that a man asked him about the statement of Allah, the Exalted: ﴿ Ar-Raḥmānu ʿalā-l-ʿArshi-stawā ﴾ (The Most Merciful rose over the Throne). He replied: “The istiwāʾ is known, the how (kayf) is unknown, belief in it is obligatory (Wājib), and asking about it is a bidʿah.”

O Lord of the heavens and the earths, O Creator of all creation — You are the One aware of what lies within, and You are the Watcher over every moving and still being. I ask You to forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not place in our hearts any rancor toward those who believe. Our Lord, indeed you are ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm.””

This is the conclusion of what we intended to mention from this abridgment of the creed of its author, as stated in his book Ghayatu-l-Marām fī Masʾalati-l-Kalām by Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Armuwī al-Shāfiʿī — and this is the belief of the majority among the early and later generations (as-Salaf wa-l-Khalaf). And all that we have cited here is from the words of Shaykh Abū-l-ʿAbbās al-Armuwī.” [1][263]

I say: The creed contained in this book is far better than that of the Ashʿarīs, yet it is still not the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah.

The author said: “What indicates the pre-eternity of the letters, absolutely, from the Book of Allāh, the Exalted, are several points…” [2][264]

[263][1] (p. 67)

[264][2] (p. 17)

Ibn Taymiyyah said: “And they introduced an innovated saying — just as others had introduced — so they said: ‘The Qurʾān is eternal (qadīm), and it consists of letters and sounds that are eternal, pre-existent, inseparable from the very essence of Allāh, exalted is He, from eternity to eternity,’ and they argued…” [1][265]

And the author found it difficult to respond to the objection of succession (taʿāqub) which he presented on the tongue of his opponents. He said: “Did the Creator speak these letters all at once or successively? If the first (all at once), then what we hear would be the very speech of Allāh — for it is necessarily successive. But if the second (successively), then it would be originated (muḥdath), for when the first part has ceased and its non-existence is established, its pre-eternity becomes impossible.” [2][266]

Then, when he attempted to respond to their objections, he abandoned this position. Indeed, the doctrine of the Sālimiyyah in this matter is extremely weak. Ibn al-Qayyim said regarding their view: “Despite that, their claim is that its letters and words do not precede one another, but rather they are all simultaneous… and the majority of rational people have said that merely

[265][1] Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā (12/320)

[266][2] (p. 41)

conceiving of this doctrine suffices to be certain of its falsehood.” [1][267]

Then he said:

“Section: On the point that recitation (al-qirāʾah) is the recited (al-maqruʾ), and that writing (al-kitābah) is the written (al-maktūb).” [2][268]

I said: This statement contradicts the belief of the salaf. Al-Bukhārī said:

“The Qurʾān is the speech (kalām) of the Lord, Glorious is His mention, while recitation (qirāʾah) is the act of the servant. The distinction between the two is not hidden except from one whose heart Allāh has blinded, whom He has not granted success nor guided to the path of righteousness. It is not for anyone to introduce into the command of Allāh, Mighty and Majestic, without knowledge — as some have claimed that the Qurʾān and our utterances of it are one and the same thing, that the recitation (tilāwah) is the recited (matlūw), and the reading (qirāʾah) is the read (maqruʾ). So it was said to him: indeed, the tilāwah is the action of the reciter, and

[267][1] Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Mursalah (p. 499)

[268][2] (p. 58)

the qirāʾah is the act of the reader." [1][269]

In any case, even though this book contains some bidʿī (innovated) beliefs, and does not show retraction from many of the erroneous views he held — such as his approval of innovation, seeking blessings (tabarruk) through the righteous, and tawassul (intercession) … etc. — still, if its attribution were authentic, it would be good for what it includes of retraction from the vile Ashʿarī doctrines concerning the attributes of Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn. And it would be, by Allāh's permission, an expiation for him.

However, a number of scholars have doubted its authenticity and have written proofs for that. And Allāh knows best what is correct. We ask Allāh that it be authentic.

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[269][1] Khalq Afʿāl al-ʿIbād (p. 105).